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ABSTRACT

This annual report presents state-level data about education in Rhode Island, focusing this year on what appears to support or obstruct the relationship most central to education, that of teacher and student. Data are provided for the state's 37 school districts (including 1 operated by the state). The sections of the report are: (1) "Student Achievement--Measuring How Well the Student/Teacher Relationship Is Fulfilling Its Task"; (2) "Student Achievement Adjusted for 'Value-Added'--Measuring How Well Schools Support the Student/Teacher Relationship"; (3) "Supporting Teachers--The Teacher's Job Has Changed"; (4) "Supporting Students--Kids Face More Challenges Than Ever"; (5) "Supporting Teachers and Students with Adequate Financial Resources--From the District, the Town and the State"; and (6) "Conclusion: A Focus on the Teacher/Student Relationship Will Help Focus Disparate Efforts and Initiatives." Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress and other national measures suggest that Rhode Island students' academic achievement scores are right around the national average. The scores of Rhode Island students are similar to those of students in states like Texas, California, and Virginia, which are as socially and ethnically diverse as Rhode Island. However, Rhode Island ranks below other New England states academically. Most Rhode Island schools and districts have begun the serious work of improving student achievement. To maximize the efficiency of improvement efforts, all educational decisions should be evaluated in terms of what they will mean for the student/teacher relationship. The report provides select information from the School Accountability for Teaching and Learning (SALT) Surveys that students, teachers, and parents in Rhode Island complete each year. (Contains 7 tables and 12 figures.) (SLD)

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Rhode Island Schools for Change 2000

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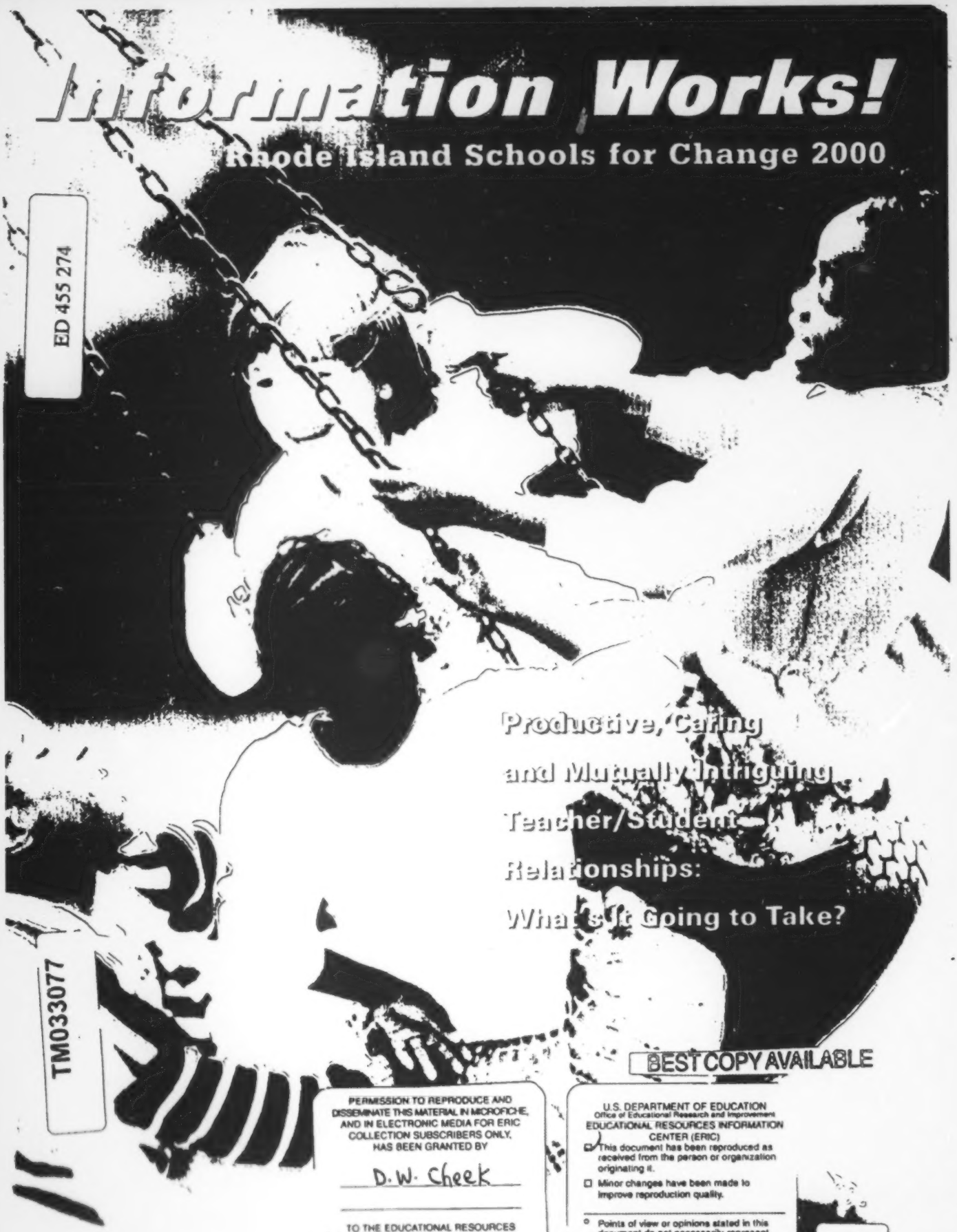

Productive, Caring and Mutually Intriguing Teacher/Student Relationships: What's It Going to Take?

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Information Works!

Measuring Rhode Island Schools for Change 2000

Statewide Analysis 2000

Productive, Caring and Mutually Intriguing Teacher/Student Relationships: What's It Going to Take?

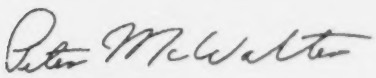
May 2000

Dear Citizens of Rhode Island:

The strategic plan for the Rhode Island Department of Education asserts that "A quality education is a lasting personal treasure that expands opportunities throughout life." Forming this pearl of great value slowly and patiently over many years is a partnership among parents, students, communities, and teachers. Teachers occupy a critical role in this partnership. As a classroom teacher in the public schools, I well remember a number of students' lives that were dramatically affected by dedicated teachers. Teachers can and do make a difference.

William James, the noted American psychologist, once remarked that "Teaching is the insertion of an inventive mind between a fact and a pupil." Teachers day after day assume the challenging and immensely important task of helping every student learn. Teaching itself is easily one of the most complex of human activities – demanding considerable knowledge of subject matter, content standards (what all students need to know and be able to do), how people learn, good timing (the famous "teachable moment"), human growth and development, assessment, and motivation. These factors and many others must be continuously reconfigured in light of each student's individual needs with ample doses of compassion, empathy, expectation, and humor.

This year's annual report focuses on the primacy of the teacher/student relationship. It takes us on a journey of understanding why this relationship is so vital to our collective future, what key supports are currently in place within our schools, and what kinds of further supports are needed if we are going to get all students to high standards of achievement. Join with me in better understanding and supporting quality teaching and learning in every classroom of every school in our state.



Peter McWalters
Commissioner

Productive, Caring and Mutually Intriguing Teacher/Student Relationships: What's It Going to Take?

Introduction:

1 The primacy of the teacher/student relationship.

1 Some supports have been taking shape

2 From legislator to classroom teacher, we have an increasingly shared vision

2 Achieving shared vision brings us to the end of the beginning

I. Student achievement – Measuring how well the student/teacher relationship is fulfilling its task

3 RI's student achievement is average in the nation, lagging in New England

3 Poverty depresses achievement scores

3 2000 Kids Count – Child well-being indicators for New England and the U.S. average

5 Money makes a difference

5 The Children's Cabinet

7 RI's State Assessment Program

7 Sensitive performance assessments

7 Closing Sizable Gaps Between Students with Different Characteristics

8 Maintaining high expectations for all children

II. Student achievement adjusted for "value-added" – Measuring how well schools support the student/teacher relationship

9 Leveling the Playing Field

9 Statistical Modeling

11 RI's Value-Added Charts

12 High School

14 Middle School

16 Elementary School

13 Which schools appear to add value?

13 The Rhode Island Model

15 Some Schools Are More Helpful than Others When Dealing with Similar Populations.

III. Supporting Teachers – The teacher's job has changed

21 Lessons from the SALT survey – We believe in integrated curricula and standards-based instruction, but we don't often do it.

21 Early intervention would help with "problem" students

22 We do not seem to trust the research-endorsed benefits of personalized education

23 **Student relations with each other show some modest improvement**

23 **Teacher mobility**

23 **Enabling the teachers to work together more**

IV. Supporting students – Kids face more challenges than ever

24 **Who are our students?**

24 **Children's social statistics strain the teacher/student relationship**

25 **Better community support for children**

25 Ill-Used Out-of-school Time

26 Homework

26 Well-designed homework helps children meet proficiency standards

26 Home Alone

27 **Reading outside classwork**

27 **However, there is some good news about reading**

V. Supporting teachers and students with adequate financial resources – From the district, the town and the state

28 **Two separate issues of funding support: school reform and equity**

28 School reform: Funding ways to help schools climb out of their well-worn grooves

28 Article 31 targeted investments

29 Equity: Tax revenue and expenditure: two views.

33 **District level school expenditures – InSite data**

33 **A word of caution**

33 **InSite Chart #1 – A first portrait of district-to-district expenditures**

33 **Average Daily Membership (ADM)**

34 **Four of five expenditure categories**

34 **Also included is a category called "other commitments."**

35 **Per pupil expenditure (PPE)**

35 **The Virtual Rhode Island School District**

36 **InSite Chart #2**

37 **Eliminating Other Commitments**

38 **Future InSite reports**

VI. Conclusion: A focus on the teacher/student relationship will help focus disparate efforts and initiatives

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Statewide Analysis

Productive, Caring and Mutually Intriguing Teacher/Student Relationships: What's It Going to Take?

The primacy of the teacher/student relationship

When all is said and done, effective education takes place between a teacher and a student. In a well-supported, well-prepared classroom, teachers and students can both enjoy teaching and learning, often simultaneously and mutually. Good teachers intrigue the students, but are also intrigued by them. Good students know what they're supposed to be doing, are alert, well-nourished and ready for the day's successes as well as the inevitable frustrations. When the chemistry is right, teachers and students laugh, learn, work and even disagree together.

Many widely different factors contribute to supporting the teachers, the students and a context in which teaching and learning can thrive. This year, we'll look at the *Information Works!* state-level data through the lens of what appears to support or obstruct the relationship most central to education. Meeting the goal of 100% proficiency for all students still poses a major challenge to all of us, indicating that all schools, districts, communities, and most teachers and students either need additional help or to re-think how they contribute to the efficacy of teacher/student relations.

Some supports have been taking shape

In the course of the last few years, certain specific supports have been put in place for the education community. For example, schools now have a considerable information feedback system through the SALT survey, SALT visits and *Information Works!* RIDE's Field Service teams have been working directly with the schools and are constantly improving their sense of what schools need and how to help them. The state's social services have upgraded certain supports for children and their families, such as access to health care for families who previously found it financially out of reach. In RI, as well as nationally, education issues have come from the back to the front burner as critical concerns for government and public policy. The standards movement has forced real content and specificity into conversations about what a child should know

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and be able to do. Setting standards and publicly reporting on the progress towards meeting them has revealed serious fissures in the education system as a whole.

These improvements in themselves are still incomplete. Furthermore, we do not yet have a mechanism by which such different initiatives work together to form a comprehensive web of support for teaching and learning. Education is a community function that needs investments of sustained attention, strong commitment and insightful advocacy as much as it needs money.

From legislator to classroom teacher, we have an increasingly shared vision

Perhaps the most important support for RI education is our increasingly shared vision about what the general process of education should look like. The legislature embraced and actively championed the School Accountability for Teaching and Learning (SALT) vision by etching much of it into law in the 1997 Budget Article 31. That Article specified targeted financial investments and launched a public accountability and information system. The Regents set clear standards of proficiency and educators have begun to explore ways to help children reach those publicly-reported marks. Now, three years later — with the exception of a mere handful of schools and individuals — the teachers and administrators who responded to the SALT survey tell us that they strongly believe in teaching literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and they believe strongly in standard-based instruction.

Achieving shared vision brings us to the end of the beginning

Even though we have broad agreement, now begins the heavy lifting of making those agreements real in every RI classroom on a daily basis. This job cannot be left up to the teachers alone. Nor can the school carry the full weight. Each of us must do our part to create, implement, fund and protect the supports necessary to a high-functioning classroom.

I. Student achievement – Measuring how well the student/teacher relationship is fulfilling its task

RI's student achievement is average in the nation, lagging in New England

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and other national measures, Rhode Island students' academic achievement scores are right around the national average. RI students' achievement scores are similar to those in states like Texas, California and Virginia, which are as socially and ethnically diverse as RI. We are not woefully behind, but neither are we performing well. However, in a regional comparison, RI consistently performs below the other states in New England.

Poverty depresses achievement scores

According to *Kids Count* – a national organization devoted to tracking children's well-being using 10 common indicators across the states (see aecf.org) – in 1999, New Hampshire ranked first in the nation in children's well-being. All New England states ranked within the first quartile (1-12), except RI. At 17th, RI is five places behind the next lowest New England state (CT). Perhaps not surprisingly then, RI student achievement on the NAEPs lags behind the rest of New England. RI's child well-being rank suggests that student performance should rank at the top of the second quartile (the states in 13th to 25th place), but often it is closer to the lower end of this quartile, which is to say right about the national average.

Profile of Rhode Island Public Schools

The Numbers 1998-99

Students	154,785
Teachers	10,026
Schools	324
Districts*	37
Area Career & Technical Schools	8
State-operated Schools	3
Charter Schools	2

* Including 4 regionalized districts and the state-operated district of Central Falls.

2000 Kids Count
Child well-being indicators for New England and the U.S. Average

	Percent in Extreme Poverty	Percent in Poverty	1996 Poverty Rank	1996 Overall Rank	1999 Overall Rank
Connecticut	7%	17%	23rd	10th	12th
Maine	6%	14%	11th	8th	6th
Massachusetts	7%	16%	22nd	12th	8th
New Hampshire	5%	10%	1st	2nd	1st
Rhode Island	8%	17%	23rd	22nd	17th
Vermont	3%	13%	6th	6th	9th
U.S. Average	9%	20%			

Data Source: Anne E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count

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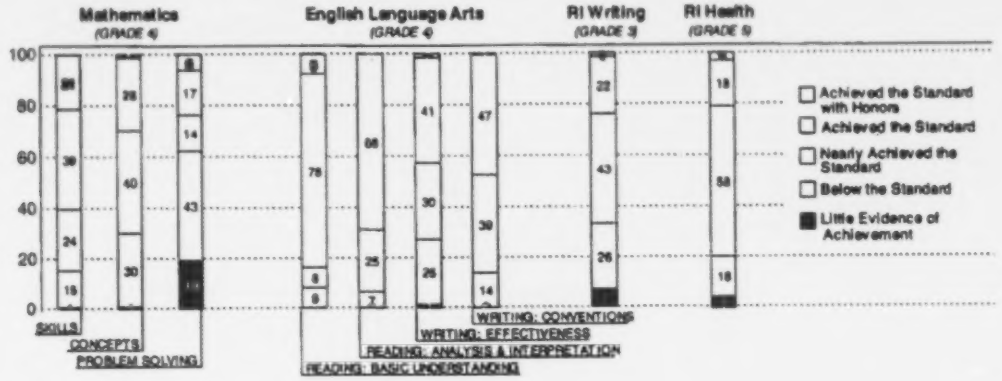
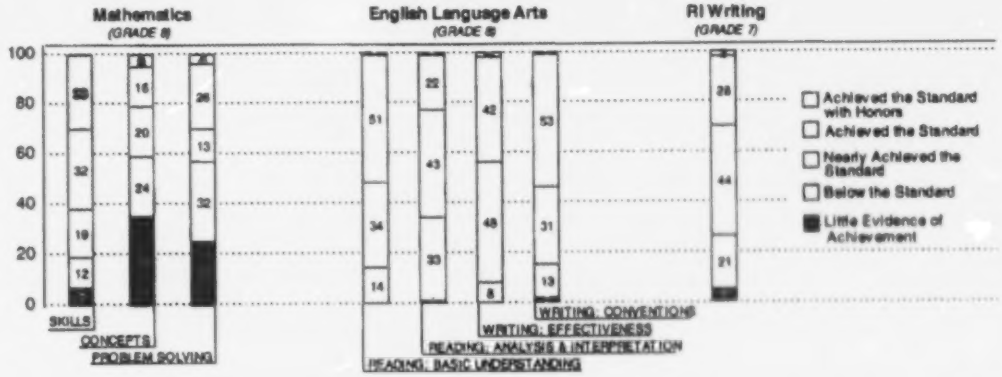
Rhode Island

Peter McWalters, Commissioner
154,785 Students
10,026 Teachers
37 School Districts

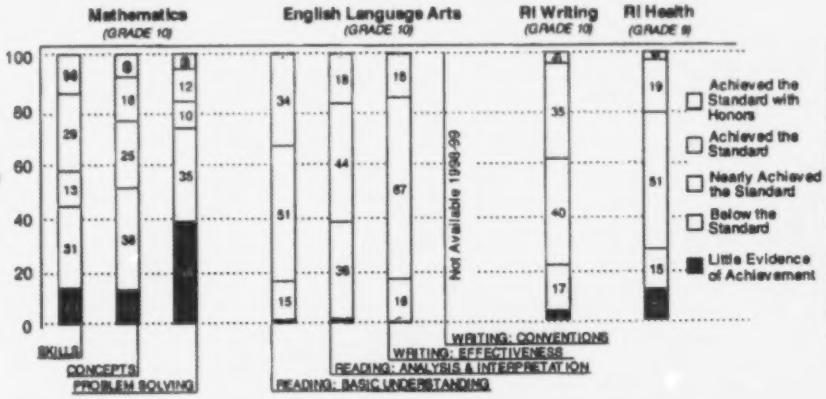
Percentage of students at each performance level on the elementary school assessments



Percentage of students at each performance level on the middle school assessments



Percentage of students at each performance level on the high school assessments



SAT

	The State
Math Average	494
Verbal Average	502
Percent of seniors taking tests	57
Percent of test-takers in college-bound programs	88

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Money makes a difference

RI's relatively lackluster academic performance is not well understood, but it is worth observing that the state's economy also lags behind the rest of New England, which limits RI's ability or willingness to increase education investment. Both Connecticut and Massachusetts have been able to set aside impressive sums of money for the purpose of re-tooling their education systems. In most cases RI's financial investments are already earmarked to meet current obligations, leaving little left over to support reforming or re-deploying the basic investment. Shifting to standards-based instruction, as merely one example, requires professional development for all teachers who were otherwise trained and requires extra meeting and planning time to make the standards coherent throughout the school or district. Our wealthier neighbors have been able to fund sustained expert attention dedicated to the process of re-tooling.

The Children's Cabinet

However, according to the Kids Count data, RI is clearly improving the general well-being for its children. The state's overall rank changed from 22nd in 1996 to 17th in 1999. Certainly many factors contribute to this change, but the cross-agency collaboration of the Children's Cabinet deserves commendation for its focus on children's issues. Partnering on this Cabinet are representatives from the executive and legislative branches of the government, as well as the directors of all agencies that deal directly with children or children's issues. The nationally recognized RIte Care initiative, which provides health insurance for children whose families' incomes are up to 250% of poverty, has already made a marked improvement in the quality of health of RI's children.

In 1994 the Children's Cabinet reshaped their goals to recognize schools as the primary interface between children and state agencies. Their guiding goals now are:

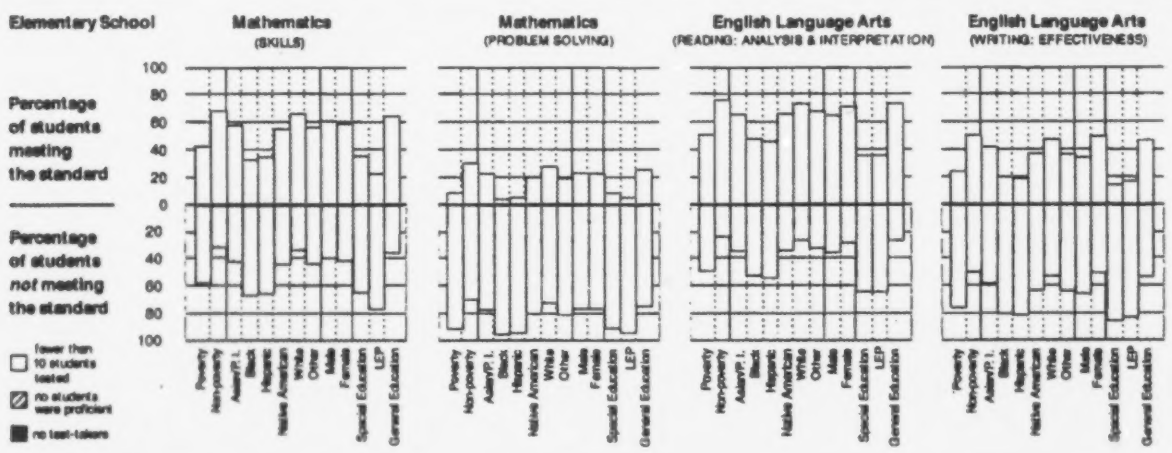
- All children enter school ready to learn;
- All youth leave school ready to lead productive lives; and
- All children and youth are safe in their homes, neighborhoods and schools.

The very nature of the Children's Cabinet's work can not help but support both teachers and students in the course of their teaching and learning. The Cabinet's collective efforts, which include improving the physical and mental health of children, reducing crime in the neighborhoods, supporting the work of the schools, among other things, all serve to reduce the strain and struggle of RI's challenged families. Inevitably, as the children arrive at school more ready to learn, less apt to "act-out" and less pre-occupied, the strain and struggle on the teachers' part will ease as well.

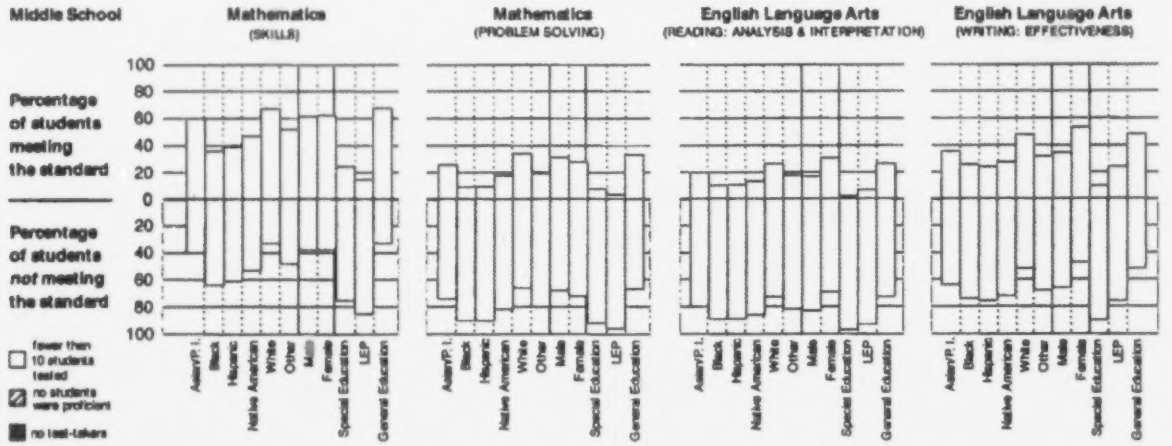
Rhode Island

Information Works! School Year 1998-1999

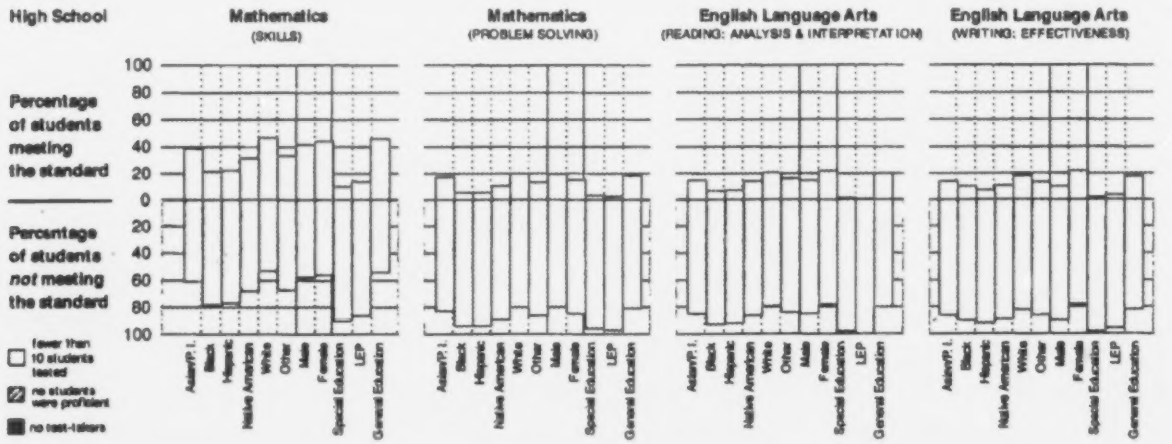
Elementary School



Middle School



High School



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RI's State Assessment Program

Information Works! is only in its 3rd year which does not provide enough longitudinal data to make definitive statements about the trend of RI achievement. While all schools should be studying their own data, RIDE strongly discourages drawing any firm conclusions about a school's overall progress or the lack of it until more years of data are available for analysis. That said, however, the assessments do seem to suggest that progress is being made – slowly – at the elementary level. The state has paid more attention to early childhood, and those initiatives appear to be paying off. We have not invested as much attention on a statewide basis to our secondary schools, and the assessments confirm this lack. Our experience with younger children and the elementary grades does teach us, however, that when our minds, hearts and money are there, we can make a difference.

Sensitive performance assessments

Widespread use of standardized performance assessments is a relatively recent phenomenon dating from the surge in the standards movement in the early 1990s. These new tests examine performance through project-like performance tasks which ask students to apply a limited number of skills – out of a large number of possibilities – to solve a problem. Different forms of the tests examine different content and skills, all of which the student needs to know to be successful on any one of the possible forms. But, for example, if one year's test has an emphasis on statistics and a school's curriculum has not emphasized statistics, the resulting depressed scores might falsely signal a lack of progress of the school's improvement as a whole. This is only to say that performance-based tests are somewhat more sensitive to the changes from one form to another than the older norm-referenced or criterion-referenced tests. Furthermore, RI's teachers and students are not yet fully acclimated to assessments emphasizing in-depth thinking or requiring writing across content areas.

Closing Sizable Gaps Between Students with Different Characteristics

What is most painful about the chart showing the achievement scores by students of certain characteristics is that the majority of the scores, in all sub-groups, appear below the line indicating the proficiency standard.

This year for the first time, a poverty indicator is published at the elementary level only. The information comes from the student cover sheets for the New Standards English Language Arts assessment, which are completed by the test administrator (usually the classroom teacher). This indicator illustrates for us, with our own data, the extent to which poverty depresses achievement scores. While schools need to find ways to help more of these children meet standards, poverty is very much a community issue and responsibility. The educational effects of poverty can be mitigated by a number of supports that begin before the child enters school. Programs such as Head Start, Parents as Teachers and other early literacy initiatives can help prepare the children of families for whom the choice between food, shelter or other basic needs and books or other learning materials is no choice at all.

RI mirrors the national pattern of girls out-performing boys in verbal skills. Conventional wisdom would have the boys outperforming girls in math, but in RI this is not especially true. Girls lag somewhat in math problem-solving at the 8th and 10th grades, but are slightly more proficient in skills at the 10th grade. Teachers need to pay careful attention to the gaps between students of different characteristics to make sure the assumptions of their own cultural backgrounds do not inadvertently hamper any child's success.

PLEASE NOTE

These findings refer to the state-level SALT Survey data which, along with all district and school data, can be found on the web at: **infoworks.ride.uri.edu**

Maintaining high expectations for all children

To some extent, the children of minority status are often children in poverty as well. All children need to be held to high expectations no matter what their status. In the SALT survey (Chart D.1 at each level), students report on their own academic expectations, that of their parents and that of their teachers. The common pattern is to see students perceiving that their parents have higher expectations than themselves and their teachers having expectations considerably lower than themselves and the parents. Schools and teachers need to consult their own data to see if they should rethink the expectations they communicate to the children. Daily life in a classroom often includes small failures or frustrations to which children are sensitive. Without adults expressing strong faith in their ability to meet standards, children can easily become disaffected and give up.

All students need the opportunity to understand fully the standards by which their work is being assessed and then, if necessary, to revise their work until they have met the standard. Especially children who struggle with academics must be given the opportunity to experience the confidence of mastery and the pleasure of having met high expectations.

There is a fine line between necessary, rigorous assessments for accountability and merely expressing criticism or disappointment to the children and teachers who have not arrived at the goal. We all hope for high-yield student/teacher relationships. Particularly during these years while we are gathering data and learning to work with standards, rubrics and performance assessments, we need to resist undercutting the teacher/student relationship with blame and disappointment.

II. Student achievement adjusted for "value-added" – Measuring how well schools support the student/teacher relationship

Leveling the Playing Field

If you took the raw achievement scores by district and sorted them high to low, you would probably find that you had also roughly sorted by the median family income of each district. Without the strong intervention of schools, students tend to achieve according to their socio-economic backgrounds. This pattern is by no means peculiar to RI.

Schools with high concentrations of low-income or special needs children have always complained about being unfairly compared to schools whose less challenged children perform at high levels on standardized tests. The public tends to compare high-performing schools with low-performing schools without considering differences in student characteristics. In fact, poverty is the strongest predictor of student achievement, except for that student's prior achievement. (Without a Universal Student Identifier system in place, RI is not able to factor prior achievement into its research.)

Statistical Modeling

In recent years educational researchers have begun building statistically generated models which can calculate what results schools are likely to achieve when taking into consideration the characteristics of their student body. For over 30 years, researchers have known that the achievement results of different sets of students, such as those from different schools, vary in association with several specific key factors, including:

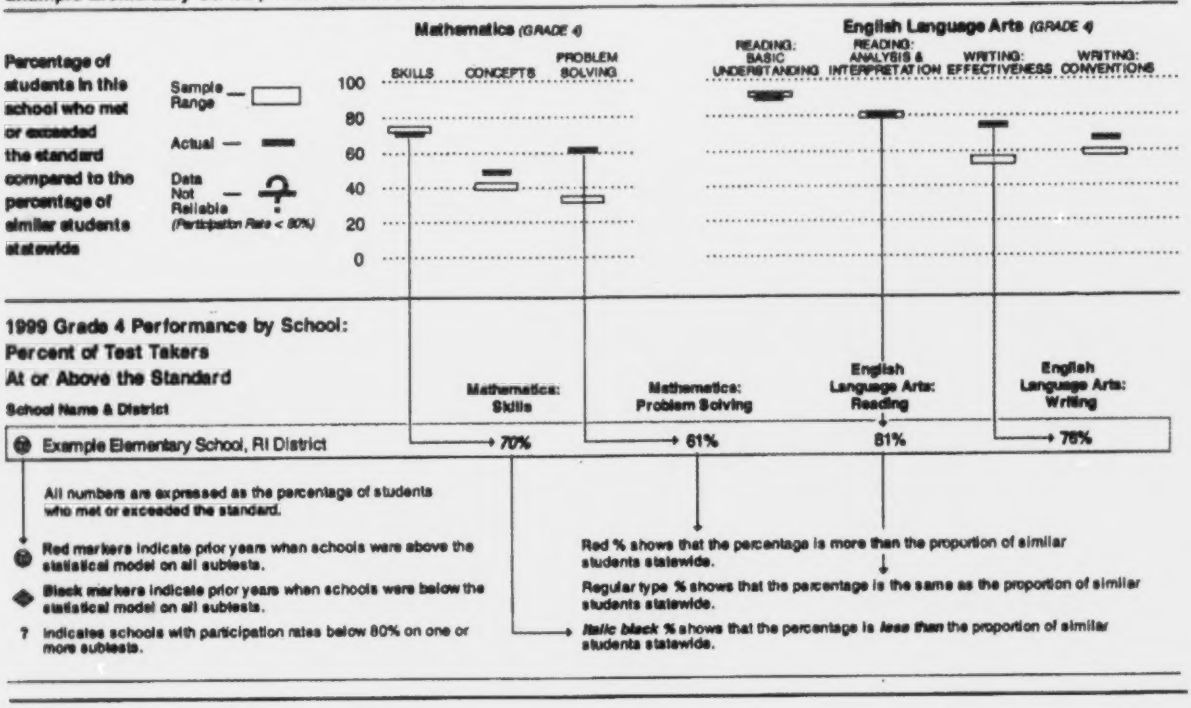
- Poverty (by far the strongest predictor of student achievement, with the exception of prior achievement)
- Non-English speaking background
- Educational background of the parents
- Special learning needs, and
- A minority/racial group identity

While individuals with one or more of these characteristics can and do perform well on state assessments, the majority tend to perform less well than children who do not have these characteristics. There are many reasons for these historic patterns of achievement. They include such things as school expectations, the availability of flexible grouping and different types of instruction, inadequate funding and support to the schools these children attend, and the quality of social services offered to students.

Statistical models make it possible to establish an achievement benchmark that acknowledges the challenges that can affect children's readiness to learn. The models adjust for certain student characteristics to look at the same achievement data through a lens that filters out some of the students' challenges. This lens provides a different, but newly uniform and, in some ways, more practical benchmark against which to measure actual achievement.

CRITICAL NOTE Rhode Island's goal is for all students to become proficient in all subjects. This computer generated model is not a standard and performing as well or even better than similar students across the state is only the beginning of a journey towards full proficiency. Over time, as the schools improve, the computer-generated ranges will themselves rise.

COLORED AND BLACK DOTS WITH YEARS INDICATED Those schools who in prior years performed consistently above the statistical projection across all subtests and those schools who performed consistently below on all modeled subtests. Those at either extremes of the list are indicated by a dot with the year this performance took place.


Example Elementary School, Rhode Island District
Mathematics (GRADE 4)
SKILLS
CONCEPTS
PROBLEM SOLVING
English Language Arts (GRADE 4)
READING: BASIC UNDERSTANDING
READING: ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION
WRITING: EFFECTIVENESS
WRITING: CONVENTIONS
Percentage of students in this school who met or exceeded the standard compared to the percentage of similar students statewide
Sample Range
Actual
Data Not Reliable
(Participation Rate < 80%)
100
80
60
40
20
0
1999 Grade 4 Performance by School:
Percent of Test Takers
At or Above the Standard
School Name & District
Mathematics: Skills
Mathematics: Problem Solving
English Language Arts: Reading
English Language Arts: Writing
Example Elementary School, RI District
70%
61%
81%
76%
All numbers are expressed as the percentage of students who met or exceeded the standard.
Red markers indicate prior years when schools were above the statistical model on all subtests.
Black markers indicate prior years when schools were below the statistical model on all subtests.
? indicates schools with participation rates below 80% on one or more subtests.
Red % shows that the percentage is more than the proportion of similar students statewide.
Regular type % shows that the percentage is the same as the proportion of similar students statewide.
Italic black % shows that the percentage is less than the proportion of similar students statewide.

RI's Value-Added Charts

The **dark red** number indicates that the school's students performed above their counterparts statewide and the **bold black** number indicates that the school's students performed below similar students statewide. 'Regular type' indicates the school's students performed the same as similar students statewide.

The question mark: Participation in the assessments is expected to be 100% unless a child is specifically exempted by an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or another valid, clearly defined reason such as prolonged illness. When a school's participation rate falls below 80% of the eligible students, a question mark appears on the bar indicating that the data might be unreliable because of the large number of eligible students who did not take the test. (Next year, RIDE will further tighten required participation rates since a set of alternative tests for special needs children will be fully operational, making it possible to account for virtually every child within the state's assessment system.)

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1999 Grade Ten Performance by School: Percent of Test Takers At or Above the Standard

School Name & District	Mathematics: Skills	Mathematics: Problem Solving	RI Writing
Barrington High School, Barrington	69%	36%	75%
Classical High School, Providence	67%	25%	60%
Cranston High School East, Cranston	46%	19%	55%
East Greenwich High School, East Greenwich	62%	36%	75%
Lincoln Senior High School, Lincoln	62%	28%	56%
Newport County Career & Technical Center, Newport	56%	19%	41%
Portsmouth High School, Portsmouth	59%	38%	55%
Rogers High School, Newport	64%	34%	47%
South Kingstown High School, South Kingstown	57%	33%	53%
? Central Falls Junior-Senior High School, Central Falls	12%	6%	22%
Exeter-West Greenwich Regional High School, Exeter-West Greenwich	62%	19%	50%
Ponaganset High School, Foster-Glocester	57%	24%	50%
Cranston High School West, Cranston	48%	23%	55%
? Hope High School, Providence	16%	2%	23%
North Smithfield Junior-Senior High School, North Smithfield	52%	27%	50%
? Shea High School, Pawtucket	23%	4%	26%
Smithfield High School, Smithfield	57%	24%	43%
William E. Tolman High School, Pawtucket	33%	10%	38%
Middletown High School, Middletown	46%	14%	39%
Narragansett High School, Narragansett	52%	19%	29%
Tiverton High School, Tiverton	39%	22%	42%
Toll Gate High School, Warwick	45%	17%	53%
Westerly High School, Westerly	40%	13%	58%
Burrillville High School, Burrillville	48%	19%	46%
Cranston Area Career & Technical Center, Cranston	33%	15%	43%
? Feinstein High School, Providence	19%	0%	25%
James L. Hanley Career & Technical Center, Providence	10%	2%	10%
? Metropolitan Center, State-operated	16%	0%	26%
Mount Pleasant High School, Providence	21%	3%	18%
Scituate High School, Scituate	50%	26%	50%
Textron Chamber of Commerce Academy, Providence	9%	0%	20%
Woonsocket Area Career & Technical Center, Woonsocket	17%	3%	10%
? Central High School, Providence	14%	1%	12%
Cumberland High School, Cumberland	49%	21%	31%
Mount Hope High School, Bristol Warren	38%	15%	40%
North Kingstown Senior High School, North Kingstown	44%	21%	41%
? Woonsocket High School, Woonsocket	32%	8%	22%
Coventry High School, Coventry	40%	12%	31%
East Providence Area Career & Technical Center, East Providence	24%	4%	10%
East Providence High School, East Providence	38%	12%	28%
? Johnston Senior High School, Johnston	35%	15%	30%
Warwick Veterans High School, Warwick	42%	16%	20%
? Alternate Learning Project, Providence	0%	0%	7%
Chariho High School, Chariho	43%	11%	25%
Chariho Area Career & Technical Center, Chariho	16%	0%	NA
Davies Career-Tech High School, State-operated	19%	3%	16%
? Educational Development Center (Grove Avenue), East Providence	15%	0%	10%
North Providence High School, North Providence	27%	7%	28%
Pilgrim High School, Warwick	37%	15%	31%
Warwick Area Career & Technical Center, Warwick	19%	5%	12%
West Warwick High School, West Warwick	34%	10%	24%

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Which schools appear to add value?

In these charts, all the numbers you see are expressed as percentages of each school's children who met or exceeded the standard on each subtest. Again, 100% proficiency is the standard for all children, but these charts give us an idea as to which schools are helping more of their students – including their challenged students – to progress toward the standard. Each subtest was modeled separately, showing how comparable students statewide would be expected to perform on the subtest. The performance of these comparable students (virtual students, if you will) is then compared with the school's actual achievement. Schools whose students perform better than the comparable students (especially over multiple years) are considered to be adding more value to their students' education.

Thus, in the "value-added" lists, you are looking at all RI schools separated by level, in reverse chronological order – high, middle and elementary – sorted according to the results of the modeling. Each school's individual modeling is represented on the second field on the first page of each *Information Works!* school report.

The Rhode Island Model

For the specific elements involved in this year's statistical model, please consult the *Information Works!* Users Guide. A technical brief about the design and building of the model is available on the *Information Works!* home page infoworks.ride.uri.edu. You can also obtain a hard copy through the Office of Information Services and Research at the RI Department of Education.

1999 Grade Eight Performance by School: Percent of Test Takers At or Above the Standard

School Name & District	Mathematics: Skills	Mathematics: Problem Solving	ELA: Reading	ELA: Writing
Archie R. Cole Junior High School, East Greenwich	83%	68%	43%	76%
Nathanael Greene Middle School, Providence	55%	27%	23%	43%
Scituate Middle School, Scituate	80%	49%	56%	82%
Coventry Middle School, Coventry	70%	45%	32%	59%
Frank E. Thompson Middle School, Newport	72%	30%	27%	36%
Portsmouth Middle School, Portsmouth	79%	40%	47%	67%
Samuel W. Bridgham Middle School, Providence	40%	11%	9%	28%
Wickford Middle School, North Kingstown	80%	53%	37%	72%
South Kingstown Junior High School, South Kingstown	81%	47%	46%	43%
Barrington Middle School, Barrington	83%	56%	53%	68%
Wilbur & McMahon Schools, Little Compton	86%	44%	49%	57%
Burrillville Middle School, Burrillville	58%	31%	32%	58%
Jamestown School-Lawn, Jamestown	88%	47%	24%	57%
Greystone School, North Providence	61%	21%	56%	71%
Exeter-West Greenwich Regional Junior High, Ex. - W.G.	71%	43%	25%	46%
Gilbert Stuart Middle School, Providence	20%	5%	2%	19%
Hugh B. Bain Middle School, Cranston	53%	24%	15%	36%
Joseph H. Gaudet School, Middletown	68%	31%	25%	59%
Park View Middle School, Cranston	66%	33%	29%	55%
John F. Deering Middle School, West Warwick	61%	25%	25%	39%
Kickemuit Middle School, Bristol Warren	59%	29%	29%	43%
Lincoln Middle School, Lincoln	79%	37%	24%	53%
Narragansett Pier School, Narragansett	77%	38%	12%	42%
Aldrich Junior High School, Warwick	74%	32%	19%	37%
Cumberland Middle School, Cumberland	61%	20%	10%	52%
Davisville Middle School, North Kingstown	66%	38%	24%	59%
North Cumberland Middle School, Cumberland	82%	44%	20%	51%
Ponaganset Middle School, Foster-Glocester	65%	50%	30%	57%
Gorton Junior High School, Warwick	70%	24%	12%	31%
Calcutt Middle School, Central Falls	35%	11%	11%	23%
Joseph Jenks Junior High School, Pawtucket	37%	11%	12%	34%
Roger Williams Middle School, Providence	36%	6%	8%	18%
Samuel Slater Junior High School, Pawtucket	41%	18%	10%	28%
Esek Hopkins Middle School, Providence	27%	9%	10%	27%
Perry Middle School, Providence	25%	2%	6%	9%
Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School, Smithfield	74%	35%	33%	57%
Western Hills Middle School, Cranston	71%	40%	31%	56%
Babcock Middle School, Westerly	64%	26%	27%	52%
Birchwood School, North Providence	57%	22%	27%	45%
Nathan Bishop Middle School, Providence	26%	7%	10%	16%
Riverside Junior High School, East Providence	53%	22%	12%	29%
Tiverton Middle School, Tiverton	68%	37%	19%	42%
Woonsocket Middle School, Woonsocket	42%	9%	10%	13%
Centredale School, North Providence	63%	26%	26%	44%
Chariho Regional Middle School, Chariho	64%	33%	21%	32%
Edward Martin Junior High School, East Providence	57%	16%	14%	32%
North Smithfield Jr. - Sr. High School, North Smithfield	71%	34%	24%	51%
Dr. Edward Ricci School, North Providence	42%	19%	15%	32%
Goff Junior High School, Pawtucket	49%	15%	13%	31%
Nicholas A. Ferri Middle School, Johnston	50%	19%	11%	32%
Winman Junior High School, Warwick	64%	32%	25%	45%

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Some Schools Are More Helpful than Others When Dealing with Similar Populations

The value-added charts tell us that certain schools have probably assembled a variety of strategies that are more successful at helping their children learn than others. The red dots indicate what schools have been high-achieving over time. Spending a day in a relatively successful school, observing teaching, learning, and communications strategies can provide demonstrations of techniques that struggling schools might want to emulate. Educators who have been part of SALT visiting teams will tell you that observing a school for a week was arguably the best professional development they have ever had.

Similarly, all schools' SALT data is on-line, accessible through the *Information Works!* home page. Those data will illuminate what practices might be helping successful schools. Do teachers share more decision-making? Do students feel they have someone to talk to? Do students have the opportunity to revise work that has not yet met the standard? Do teachers communicate high expectations? Are parents involved? Even without a visit, much information about these schools is available.

While some schools might be having excellent luck with a math program or a reading initiative, a good general statement about the higher-functioning schools is that the teachers and students are more accessible to one another and more content passes between them in a way that is retained. The conditions are such that teachers and students, together, are more productive. Presumably, these schools are more supportive of the student/teacher relationship than others.

1999 Grade Four Performance by School:
Percent of Test Takers At or Above the Standard *Page 1 of 4*

School Name & District	Mathematics: Skills	Mathematics: Problem Solving	English Language Arts: Reading	English Language Arts: Writing
Agnes B. Hennessey School, East Providence	74%	26%	70%	41%
Asa Messer School, Providence	52%	2%	63%	25%
Clayville School, Scituate	95%	70%	95%	85%
Elizabeth Baldwin School, Pawtucket	48%	13%	60%	32%
Elmhurst School, Portsmouth	88%	55%	95%	68%
Hamilton School, North Kingstown	92%	45%	92%	62%
Hampden Meadows School, Barrington	81%	56%	89%	71%
Holden School, Warwick	72%	38%	93%	67%
Kevin K. Coleman School, Woonsocket	54%	17%	58%	28%
Narragansett Elementary School, Narragansett	74%	36%	83%	59%
Oak Lawn School, Cranston	84%	41%	88%	59%
Old County Road School, Smithfield	82%	39%	92%	73%
Pocasset School Tiverton	86%	44%	82%	84%
Tiogue School, Coventry	77%	46%	88%	72%
Tower Street School, Westerly	71%	34%	76%	54%
William D'Abate School, Providence	50%	5%	53%	29%
Charlestown Elementary School, Chariho	81%	36%	77%	70%
Chester W. Barrows School, Cranston	66%	39%	82%	41%
Community School, Cumberland	87%	35%	86%	66%
Daniel D. Waterman School, Cranston	85%	33%	89%	76%
Edmund W. Flynn School, Providence	46%	7%	56%	28%
George Hansford School, East Greenwich	88%	40%	88%	60%
Glen Hills School, Cranston	87%	43%	91%	59%
Hope Valley Elementary School, Chariho	85%	35%	84%	78%
James R. D. Oldham School, East Providence	55%	20%	71%	41%
John W. Horton School, Cranston	76%	28%	69%	59%
Meadowcrest School, East Providence	71%	38%	88%	48%
Reservoir Avenue School, Providence	51%	6%	42%	25%
State Street School, Westerly	76%	25%	86%	47%
Wakefield School, South Kingstown	75%	44%	85%	67%
West Broadway School, Providence	38%	5%	44%	7%
West Kingston School, South Kingstown	79%	46%	80%	74%
Capt. Isaac Paine School, Foster	77%	39%	67%	61%
Cranston - Calvert School, Newport	75%	34%	80%	58%
Drum Rock School, Warwick	66%	*18%*	76%	71%
Emma G. Whiteknact School, East Providence	55%	*6%*	71%	42%
Fogarty Memorial School, Glocester	78%	28%	90%	81%
Forest Park School, North Kingstown	82%	53%	81%	29%
Jamestown School-Melrose, Jamestown	70%	38%	86%	67%
John F. Horgan School, West Warwick	50%	27%	65%	51%
Marieville School, North Providence	76%	22%	76%	53%
Myron J. Francis Elementary, East Providence	79%	45%	73%	53%
Nonquit School, Tiverton	84%	29%	83%	71%

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1999 Grade Four Performance by School: Percent of Test Takers At or Above the Standard *Page 2 of 4*

School Name & District	Mathematics: Skills	Mathematics: Problem Solving	English Language Arts: Reading	English Language Arts: Writing
North Scituate School, Scituate	79%	53%	76%	71%
Peace Dale School, South Kingstown	76%	42%	*71%*	61%
Providence Street School, West Warwick	73%	32%	*66%*	*58%*
Scott School, Warwick	85%	45%	85%	52%
South Road Elementary School, South Kingstown	*64%*	53%	82%	55%
Stadium School, Cranston	*58%*	27%	75%	*46%*
Wilbur & McMahon Schools, Little Compton	*68%*	36%	84%	59%
Woodridge School, Cranston	*71%*	37%	84%	63%
Carl G. Lauro School, Providence	*39%*	*3%*	*45%*	*18%*
Cedar Hill School, Warwick	78%	36%	88%	66%
Edgewood Highland School, Cranston	46%	22%	72%	36%
Ella Risk School, Central Falls	*42%*	*4%*	*64%*	*32%*
Flynn Annex II, Providence	*54%*	*0%*	*52%*	*8%*
George J. West School, Providence	*46%*	*8%*	*49%*	*17%*
Hope Highlands Elementary School, Cranston	77%	38%	90%	59%
James H. Eldredge School, East Greenwich	73%	49%	87%	58%
Melville School, Portsmouth	76%	32%	83%	55%
South Side School, Providence	*35%*	*9%*	*60%*	*13%*
? Windmill Street School, Providence	*27%*	*5%*	*55%*	*25%*
Arlington School, Cranston	*29%*	*4%*	*75%*	*38%*
Forest Avenue School, Middletown	*70%*	*39%*	*76%*	*39%*
Francis J. Varieur School, Pawtucket	*53%*	*13%*	*74%*	*37%*
Matunuck School, South Kingstown	*70%*	61%	81%	*75%*
Norwood Avenue School, Cranston	*53%*	*29%*	*75%*	*31%*
Oak Haven School, Coventry	*65%*	*15%*	*74%*	*54%*
Park School, Warwick	*66%*	*19%*	*88%*	*67%*
Potowomut School, Warwick	*76%*	*45%*	97%	*52%*
Western Coventry School, Coventry	*73%*	*36%*	*83%*	*47%*
William Callahan School, Burrillville	*72%*	*19%*	*73%*	*51%*
Agnes E. Little School, Pawtucket	*46%*	*11%*	*67%*	*36%*
Ashaway Elementary School, Charlho	*70%*	*15%*	*69%*	*53%*
Carey School, Newport	*62%*	*18%*	*64%*	*49%*
Centredale School, North Providence	*79%*	*21%*	*86%*	*43%*
Eden Park School, Cranston	*72%*	*22%*	*79%*	*45%*
Harris School, Woonsocket	*57%*	*28%*	*54%*	*20%*
Hollman School, Warwick	*70%*	*20%*	*87%*	*31%*
Norwood School, Warwick	*54%*	*19%*	*79%*	*52%*
Orlo Avenue School, East Providence	*61%*	*14%*	*67%*	*28%*
Ranger School, Tiverton	*79%*	*25%*	*83%*	*38%*
Sayles ville Elementary, Lincoln	*74%*	*38%*	*70%*	*44%*
Stony Lane School, North Kingstown	*84%*	*40%*	*77%*	*40%*
Wickes School, Warwick	*62%*	*19%*	*83%*	*63%*
Cumberland Hill School, Cumberland	75%	34%	83%	71%
Richmond Elementary School, Charlho	70%	31%	78%	71%
Robertson Annex, Central Falls	*29%*	*10%*	*38%*	*14%*
Social Street School, Woonsocket	*51%*	*6%*	*46%*	*38%*
Veterans Memorial Elementary, Central Falls	*34%*	*2%*	*54%*	*22%*
Globe Park School, Woonsocket	*50%*	*15%*	*69%*	*31%*

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1999 Grade Four Performance by School: Percent of Test Takers At or Above the Standard *Page 3 of 4*

School Name & District	Mathematics: Skills	Mathematics: Problem Solving	English Language Arts: Reading	English Language Arts: Writing
Greenbush Elementary School, West Warwick	63%	29%	75%	73%
◆ Hoxsie School, Warwick	66%	31%	70%	38%
Lincoln Central Elementary School, Lincoln	69%	41%	79%	54%
Pothier School, Woonsocket	55%	9%	57%	14%
Rhodes School, Warwick	64%	20%	79%	47%
Sackett Street School, Providence	29%	5%	41%	8%
● William R. Dutemple School, Cranston	59%	27%	85%	44%
Bernon Heights School, Woonsocket	54%	9%	69%	20%
Blackrock School, Coventry	56%	29%	73%	55%
● Brown Avenue School, Johnston	71%	29%	82%	39%
Camden Avenue School, Providence	18%	0%	29%	17%
Citizens Memorial School, Woonsocket	49%	9%	57%	20%
◆ Colt-Andrews School, Bristol-Warren	74%	26%	67%	40%
◆◆ Curvin-McCabe School, Pawtucket	57%	28%	82%	27%
◆ Dunn's Corners School, Westerly	61%	25%	81%	63%
Garden City School, Cranston	64%	34%	70%	40%
Graniteville School, Johnston	69%	14%	77%	40%
Greenwood School, Warwick	82%	25%	82%	50%
Greystone School, North Providence	59%	5%	89%	50%
◆◆ Hopkins Hill School, Coventry	59%	30%	83%	46%
Lippitt School, Warwick	83%	32%	73%	32%
◆ Lonsdale Elementary School, Lincoln	52%	14%	80%	61%
Quidnessett School, North Kingstown	73%	29%	79%	48%
Raymond Laperche School, Smithfield	67%	28%	81%	43%
Robert L. Bailey Elementary School, Providence	11%	3%	8%	3%
Sarah Dyer Barnes School, Johnston	68%	29%	74%	60%
Silver Spring School, East Providence	57%	40%	65%	43%
Thornton School, Johnston	62%	14%	75%	22%
Waddington School, East Providence	80%	28%	80%	38%
Edward S. Rhodes School, Cranston	63%	19%	84%	28%
◆◆ Fallon Memorial School, Pawtucket	51%	10%	44%	15%
● Fort Barton School, Tiverton	82%	26%	69%	55%
◆ Garvin Memorial School, Cumberland	61%	14%	73%	59%
Greene School, Warwick	80%	18%	75%	38%
◆ Kent Heights School, East Providence	57%	16%	57%	45%
Leo A. Savoie School, Woonsocket	59%	19%	71%	66%
◆ Robertson School, Warwick	60%	20%	76%	32%
◆◆ Stephen Olney School, North Providence	84%	12%	85%	24%
Underwood School, Newport	82%	18%	68%	27%
Warwick Neck School, Warwick	68%	62%	68%	27%
●● Wickford Elementary School, North Kingstown	72%	39%	80%	51%
Winsor Hill School, Johnston	51%	16%	67%	55%
◆ Wyman School, Warwick	60%	22%	84%	33%
Alfred Lima Sr. Elementary School, Providence	30%	0%	42%	14%
Aquidneck School, Middletown	71%	29%	81%	57%
Bradford School, Westerly	64%	19%	53%	36%
Broad Street School, Providence	33%	1%	36%	13%
Coggeshall School, Newport	44%	17%	64%	31%

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1999 Grade Four Performance by School: Percent of Test Takers At or Above the Standard *Page 4 of 4*

School Name & District	Mathematics: Skills	Mathematics: Problem Solving	English Language Arts: Reading	English Language Arts: Writing
Laurel Hill Avenue School, Providence	22%	1%	41%	15%
Martin Luther King School, Providence	44%	15%	59%	37%
Sheffield School, Newport	43%	20%	63%	33%
Cunningham School, Pawtucket	24%	5%	42%	17%
Davisville School, North Kingstown	59%	24%	71%	37%
Dr. Halliwell School, North Smithfield	73%	27%	78%	39%
Howard Hathaway School, Portsmouth	71%	25%	80%	49%
◆ Oakland Beach School, Warwick	58%	15%	67%	26%
Stone Hill School, Cranston	60%	19%	63%	57%
Vartan Gregorian School, Providence	24%	5%	50%	15%
West Glocester Elementary School, Glocester	69%	34%	78%	54%
William Winsor School, Smithfield	77%	29%	85%	39%
Winters Annex, Pawtucket	34%	5%	43%	17%
Alan Shawn Feinstein School, Central Falls	24%	0%	21%	16%
◆ B.F. Norton Elementary School, Cumberland	53%	14%	57%	41%
Charles Fortes School, Providence	11%	1%	32%	6%
Francis School, Warwick	58%	33%	75%	41%
◆ Hope School, Scituate	67%	34%	84%	44%
◆◆ Hugh Cole School, Bristol-Warren	56%	13%	63%	43%
Mandella Woods School, Providence	6%	2%	31%	0%
Mary E. Fogarty School, Providence	21%	0%	35%	8%
◆ Metcalf School, Exeter-West Greenwich	65%	27%	72%	54%
Springbrook Elementary School, Westerly	45%	22%	75%	33%
◆ Steere Farm Elementary School, Burrillville	69%	21%	85%	36%
Veazie Street School, Providence	30%	2%	36%	10%
Webster Avenue School, Providence	18%	0%	23%	14%
Anna M. McCabe School, Smithfield	71%	29%	72%	46%
Ashton School, Cumberland	62%	16%	64%	36%
◆ Dr. Edward Ricci School, North Providence	50%	14%	61%	44%
Flora S. Curtis School, Pawtucket	51%	14%	63%	36%
George C. Calef School, Johnston	51%	14%	49%	20%
George J. Peters School, Cranston	63%	21%	67%	32%
Gladstone Street School, Cranston	36%	7%	39%	24%
◆ James L. McGuire School, North Providence	67%	22%	72%	35%
John F. Kennedy School, Middletown	52%	21%	58%	33%
Joseph A. Whelan School, North Providence	41%	2%	36%	16%
Maisie E. Quinn School, West Warwick	39%	11%	50%	15%
◆ Nathanael Greene School, Pawtucket	47%	11%	59%	16%
Northern Lincoln Elementary School, Lincoln	66%	25%	64%	49%
Pleasant View School, Providence	24%	2%	46%	15%
◆◆ Potter-Burrs School, Pawtucket	51%	16%	63%	32%
Robert F. Kennedy School, Providence	35%	7%	45%	10%
◆ Sherman School, Warwick	53%	6%	67%	22%
Sullivan School, Newport	28%	3%	41%	8%
Washington Oak School, Coventry	59%	17%	67%	42%
◆◆ Watters School, East Providence	54%	17%	63%	29%

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***Italic black* %** shows that the percentage is *less than* the proportion of similar students statewide.

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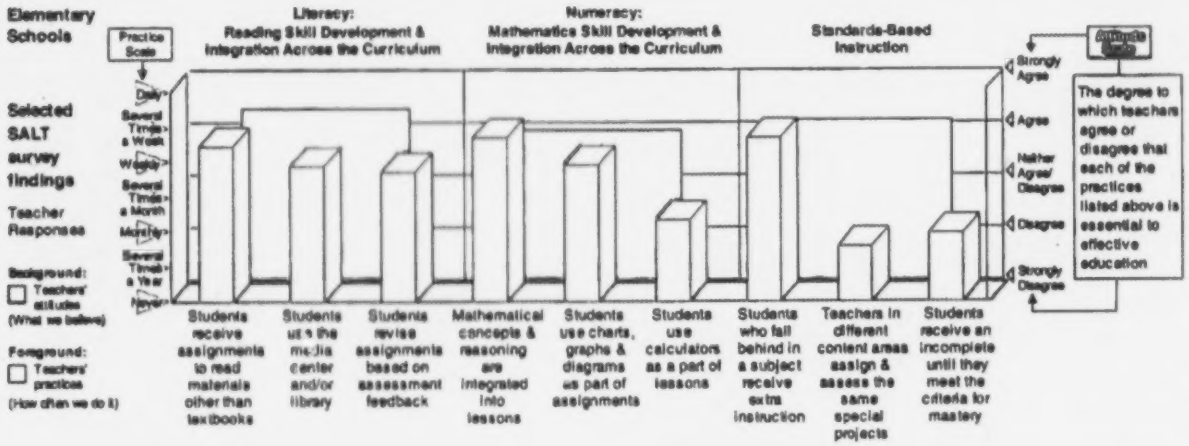
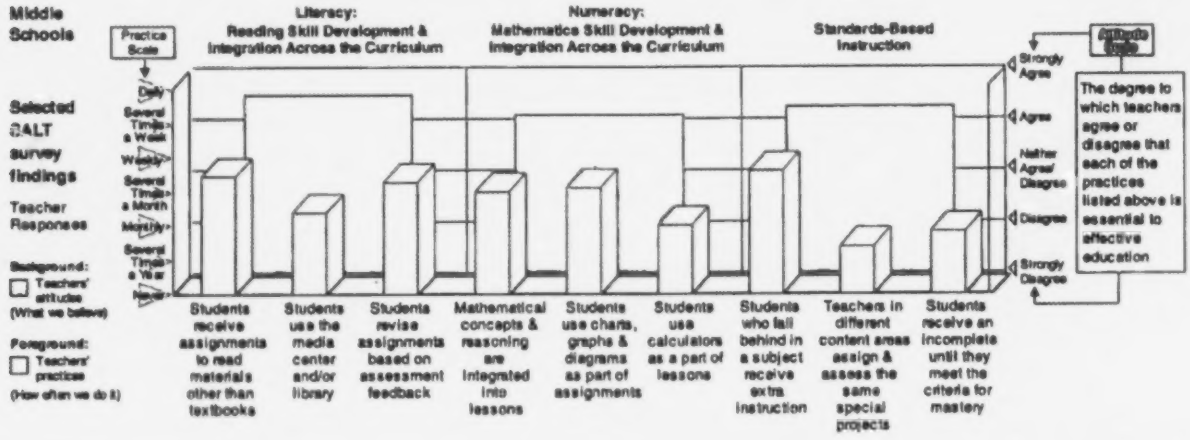

Elementary Schools
Selected SALT survey findings
Teacher Responses
Background: Teachers' attitudes (What we believe)
Foreground: Teachers' practices (How often we do it)
Practice Scale
Daily
Several Times a Week
Weekly
Several Times a Month
Monthly
Several Times a Year
Never
Literacy: Reading Skill Development & Integration Across the Curriculum
Numeracy: Mathematics Skill Development & Integration Across the Curriculum
Standards-Based Instruction
Attitude Scale
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree/ Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
The degree to which teachers agree or disagree that each of the practices listed above is essential to effective education
Students receive assignments to read materials other than textbooks
Students use the media center and/or library
Students revise assignments based on assessment feedback
Mathematical concepts & reasoning are integrated into lessons
Students use charts, graphs & diagrams as part of assignments
Students use calculators as a part of lessons
Students who fall behind in a subject receive extra instruction
Teachers in different content areas assign & assess the same special projects
Students receive an incomplete until they meet the criteria for mastery


Middle Schools
Selected SALT survey findings
Teacher Responses
Background: Teachers' attitudes (What we believe)
Foreground: Teachers' practices (How often we do it)
Practice Scale
Daily
Several Times a Week
Weekly
Several Times a Month
Monthly
Several Times a Year
Never
Literacy: Reading Skill Development & Integration Across the Curriculum
Numeracy: Mathematics Skill Development & Integration Across the Curriculum
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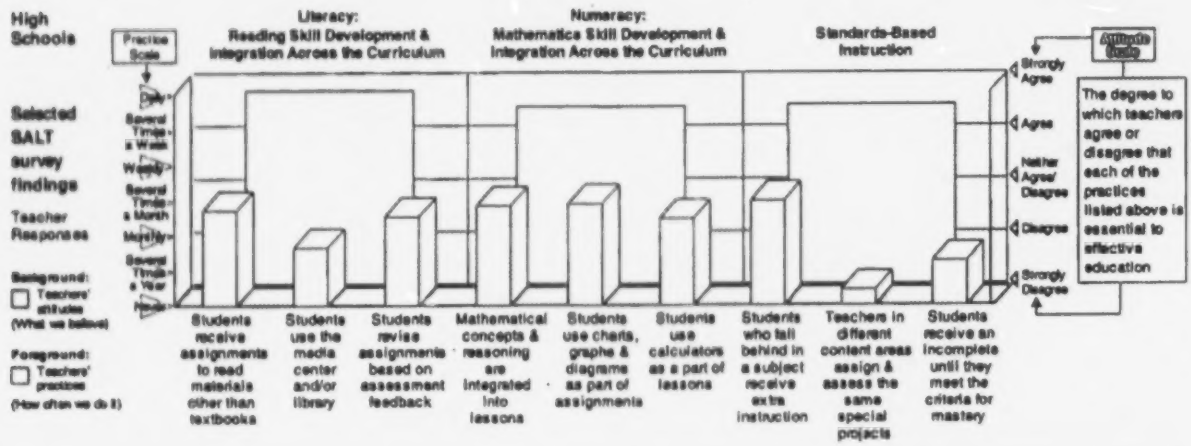
High Schools
Selected SALT survey findings
Teacher Responses
Background: Teachers' attitudes (What we believe)
Foreground: Teachers' practices (How often we do it)
Practice Scale
Daily
Several Times a Week
Weekly
Several Times a Month
Monthly
Several Times a Year
Never
Literacy: Reading Skill Development & Integration Across the Curriculum
Numeracy: Mathematics Skill Development & Integration Across the Curriculum
Standards-Based Instruction
Attitude Scale
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree/ Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
The degree to which teachers agree or disagree that each of the practices listed above is essential to effective education
Students receive assignments to read materials other than textbooks
Students use the media center and/or library
Students revise assignments based on assessment feedback
Mathematical concepts & reasoning are integrated into lessons
Students use charts, graphs & diagrams as part of assignments
Students use calculators as a part of lessons
Students who fall behind in a subject receive extra instruction
Teachers in different content areas assign & assess the same special projects
Students receive an incomplete until they meet the criteria for mastery

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III. Supporting teachers – The teacher's job has changed

Lessons from the SALT survey

We believe in integrated curricula and standards-based instruction, but we don't often do it

For the most part, the data from the spring of 1999 changed very little from that of 1998. (The changes are noted throughout the discussion below.) In general, teachers believe in the specific philosophies of school reform, but they also report that they engage very little in practices associated with those beliefs. Unless teachers have time to plan together, they can not share strategies, nor can they work towards agreements on commonly held standards. Time for training in the new techniques and the availability of training opportunities are both significant obstacles to the implementation of these methods. Many schools, indeed most high schools, are not organized to support project-oriented instruction nor the sort of personalized education that supports both the teacher and the student meeting proficiency standards.

The teacher responses on the SALT survey do indicate a slight, but generally positive sign that both integrated instruction and family involvement are improving. These changes are too subtle for us to celebrate fully. Still, in the national studies using the survey, researchers have found that schools that make many small improvements in their levels of implementation will begin to see observable differences in the efficacy of the school over time.

Early intervention would help with "problem" students

Teacher reports of their expectations of students remained quite flat from the first year of data to the second. We can presume that the number of students arriving at school not fully ready to learn is also similar from 1998 to 1999. However, the data suggests that schools and districts have not adequately implemented the sorts of supportive mechanisms – strategies for personalization, student support centers, etc. – that give teachers the options, time and external help that would empower them to affect the outcomes of the children they teach. By all means, teachers should look to their own expectations. But without intervention from the larger community and more support to the teachers themselves, the expectations for challenged children will probably not change significantly.

The data on the very youngest children (the Teacher/Student Rating Scale) shows that teachers perceive roughly 20% of the children to have a "moderate" or "major" problem with their behavior. However, the kinds of behavior the teachers flag the most are not personality traits — such as timid or depressed — but behaviors like

PLEASE NOTE

These findings refer to the state-level SALT Survey data which, along with all district and school data, can be found on the web at: **infoworks.ride.uri.edu**

staying on task, working with others, persistence and following directions — problems that respond well to in-class strategies and special help or attention. Since the percentage of children for whom teachers report low expectations is eerily close to RI's drop out rate, higher rates of early intervention would most likely go a long way towards improving the outlook for this cohort of "problem" children. We all know that if discipline issues go unaddressed, issues, habits and hard-to-manage behaviors only get worse as the children become adolescents.

We do not seem to trust the research-endorsed benefits of personalized education

Research shows that all children need to be known well by at least one adult in the building. Strategies for personalization, such as advisories, teaming, clusters and houses go a long way towards working on problem-solving skills because it gives the teachers time to work with students whom they know, providing coaching and modeling skills relevant to daily circumstances. Teachers need regularly scheduled time to talk together about the students.

With a big shot in the arm from the Carnegie Foundation Middle Grades Initiative, a number of RI middle schools were able to re-arrange their existing resources into structures more supportive of student learning. RI's so-called Carnegie schools implemented or are in the process of teaming their teachers, scheduling their common planning time, giving teachers more decision-making latitude, organizing more support services for their students and so on. Such changes do not bear fruit overnight because school communities must adjust to the new organization and expectations. In these schools, teachers report decreases in discipline referrals, less professional strain and burn-out, a general improvement in the school community atmosphere and increased focus on learning.

At the high school level, which tends to resist this sort of personalization, 42% of the students report that getting along with their teachers is a moderate or big problem. Sixty-five percent report that they feel like they can "never or hardly ever" talk to a teacher or other staff member in their school about personal or family problems. This would indicate that some relations between the teachers and the students are strained or muted, which cannot have a positive effect on achievement. One in three students report being robbed at school one or more times, indicating a somewhat hostile, disrespectful school climate. Fifty-eight percent indicate that their parents participate never or hardly ever in school activities or meetings – including PTA, sports events, dances, parents workshops, etc. (Charts C.2, .3, .5 and .6) The climate of some schools does not encourage a culture of teaching and learning.

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Student relations with each other show some modest improvement

At all three levels (chart I.2), teachers report a small improvement among students in "shows respect to peers" and a decline in the extent to which students "are disruptive." An improvement in the student climate could pave the way for a generally improved culture of inquiry. An investment in improving relations between teachers and students would capitalize on this small rapprochement among the students.

Teacher mobility

Survey results indicate significant mobility among the teachers now and more expected with retirements (Chart A.1). Fully 30% of the teachers report that they have been teaching in the building they currently work in for three years or less. Only one third of those teachers report that they are new to teaching with only three years of experience or less. Thus, 20% of RI's veteran teachers switched schools in the last few years. We do not know the cause of such mobility among teachers. A teacher may well need a change or have found more like-minded colleagues, but school reform is hard enough without frequently changing the key players. Furthermore, 39% of the teachers have been teaching for 21 years or more and can be expected to retire in the foreseeable future, creating yet more instability. Stability is important to a child as well as a school.

Enabling the teachers to work together more

Arguably, one of the most important supports schools can organize for their teachers is the time for small groups or teams of teachers to share information about specific students, about their own curricula and about teaching, research or new materials. The professional development involved in on-going co-learning — as well as the mutual support of other teachers — refreshes, energizes and relieves the isolation of classroom teachers. Students greatly benefit from well-supported teachers.

PLEASE NOTE

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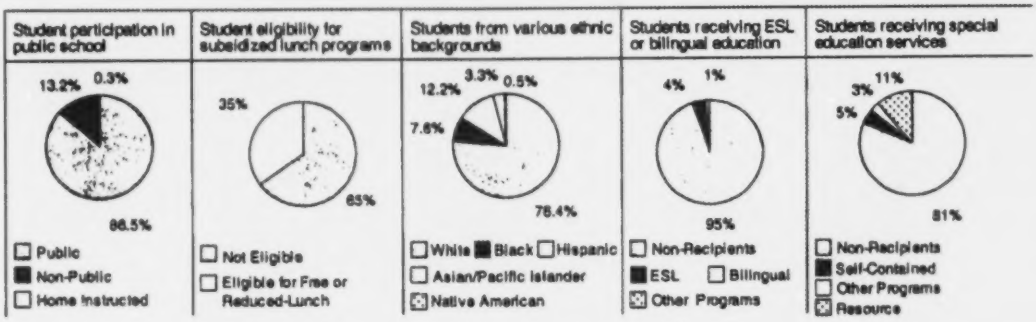
Rhode Island — *Information Works! School Year 1998-1999*

Characteristics of students attending school in this state



IV. Supporting students — Kids face more challenges than ever

Who are our students?

This year the numbers for the "students who participate in public schools" was extended to one decimal place, allowing enough detail to see students who are being home-instructed. As with the rest of the nation, RI's small number of home-instructed students is rising.

Children's social statistics strain the teacher/student relationship

The growing rate of poverty among children has received much attention, and we note it now only to re-emphasize that poverty has a strong negative impact on student performance for a whole host of reasons. Often low-income parents are too consumed with the challenges of survival to have the extra time or attention to provide their children with homework help, getting involved with the school, or clear, consistent, informed discipline strategies. Schools cannot overcome the stresses of poverty by themselves, and the larger community needs to pay considerable attention to help students overcome the stresses and distractions poverty inevitably brings.

Without the same force as poverty, single parent families can also present a hardship to the child. Of course, many single-parent families are thriving, and their children are not necessarily hampered by their single-parent status. But we do know that as a group, children in single-parent families face statistically greater challenges. This is especially true for single teen mothers. Nationally, the teen pregnancy rate is dropping, but RI's is coming down at the slowest rate in the country.

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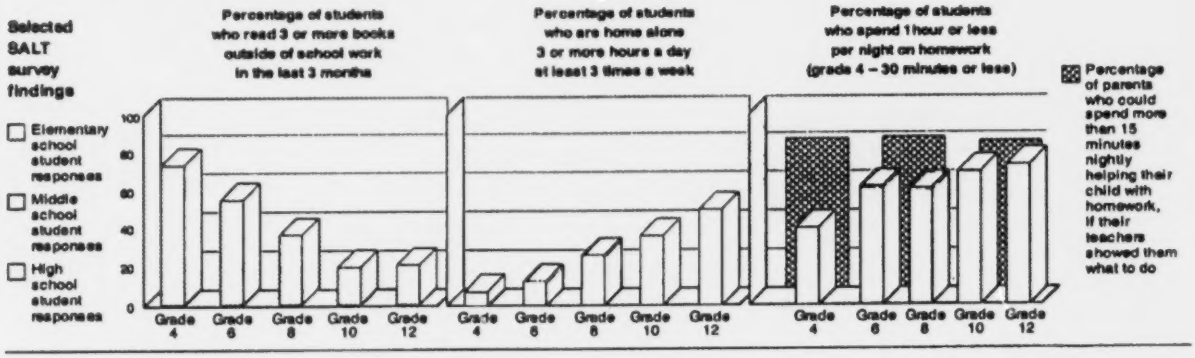
According to *Kids Count*, in 1997 22% of RI's children lived in single parent households. Thirty-seven percent of the children in the core cities rely on one parent. In general, we know that roughly half of all children have experienced a divorce or never did live with both parents. The proportion of children living with one parent has almost doubled since 1970. In 1997, 70% of children living below the poverty line lived with a single mother. The 2000 Kids Count reports, "Compared with teenagers who grow up with both parents at home, adolescents who have lived apart from one of their parents during some period of their childhood are twice as likely to drop out of school, twice as likely to have a child before 20, and one and a half times more likely to be out of school and out of work in their teens and early twenties." (2000 Kids Count, Page 8) School stability and personalized attention is one way to support children struggling with limited or inadequate support at home. The struggles some children bring with them from home add stress to their student/teacher relationships and can depress the efficacy of teaching and learning.


Selected SALT survey findings
Elementary school student responses
Middle school student responses
High school student responses
Percentage of students who read 3 or more books outside of school work in the last 3 months
Percentage of students who are home alone 3 or more hours a day at least 3 times a week
Percentage of students who spend 1 hour or less per night on homework (grade 4 – 30 minutes or less)
Percentage of parents who could spend more than 15 minutes nightly helping their child with homework, if their teachers showed them what to do
100
80
60
40
20
0
Grade 4
Grade 6
Grade 8
Grade 10
Grade 12

Better community support for children

Ill-Used Out-of-school Time

Parents, communities and schools need to work together to help students use their out-of-school time to better purpose. On the SALT survey responses, parents tell us that most of them have at least fifteen minutes a night with which they could help their children with school-related learning, but they do not know what to do. In general, parents need more information about what parenting strategies best support a student's learning. Often schools do not assign useful and challenging homework because their experience is that it does not get done. Closer partnerships between school and home are essential for a number of reasons, but promoting the use of out-of-school time to support learning would substantially enhance a culture of learning among our young people.

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Homework

The purposes of productive homework are to

- Reinforce skills learned at school, such as math computation and spelling conventions;
- Allow children to revise work which has not yet met the standard of mastery;
- Teach children, with guidance, to complete projects on their own while learning to budget their time, do independent research and assemble reports or undertakings (such as inventions or photographic essays);
- Explore the world outside of school for information resources and instructive experiences (libraries, museums, internet, work places, etc.).

Well-designed homework helps children meet proficiency standards

The SALT survey reveals that the overwhelming majority of middle and high school students report spending less than an hour a night doing home work. Indeed, 62% of 6th graders, 61% of 8th graders and fully 70% of 10th graders do an hour or less of homework on school nights. Teachers find it very frustrating when portions of the class do their homework and portions do not. Still, time spent on well-designed, relevant homework is time well-spent indeed. Over 30% of all of RI students, at all levels watch TV three hours or more before or after school every week. Another 18% of 4th graders, dropping to 11% of 10th graders play video or computer games before or after school every school day. Clearly, translating some of this fruitless time into homework time will support the capacity of the teacher to introduce new skills and materials and would bolster the students' ability to meet proficiency standards.

Schools need to work with the students' homes to communicate clear homework standards and expectations, provide ways for parents to check to see what is assigned – especially long-range projects – and help parents provide appropriate support for their children. (Parents should never do their children's homework.) Homework is always a student responsibility first and foremost, but school communities and parents must cultivate a culture of learning and training to reinforce the expectation and importance of its completion.

Home Alone

Students who are left unsupervised are at greater risk of teen pregnancy, committing a crime, drug and alcohol involvement, and smoking cigarettes. Again, communities, parents and schools need to work together to generate more safe, enriching, interesting sports, clubs, tutoring opportunities and so on. Students need to be productively engaged during the after-school hours when parents are often still at work, getting more exercise physically and mentally. Communities who have created before- and after-school programs (such as Medicaid-funded after-school care) have often seen dramatic reductions in the incidence of social ills such as daytime crime and teen pregnancy.

Reading outside classwork

Too few children are reading outside of their classroom assignments. Outside reading drops precipitously from 4th grade to 10th grade where it levels off to about 20% of high school students reading beyond assigned classwork. The relatively robust reading habits of RI 4th graders do not persist over time.

However, there is some good news about reading

Certainly the most dramatic change in the SALT survey student results from the school year 97-98 to 98-99 was the number of students who reported reading significantly more books. The percentage of students who reported reading no books – zero – as part of an English Language Arts program dropped 30 percentage points in grades 4 through 8, then 20 percentage points in grades 9 and 10, until the 11th and 12th grades when the drops are more like 10 percentage points. This is good news. Schools have taken to heart getting their students to read more, and students seem to be responding.

Increased outside reading among students is another example of a "small improvement" which can, coupled with other small improvements, create a geometrically growing, positive effect on school climate, and later on student achievement.

V. Supporting teachers & students with adequate financial resources – From the district, the town and the state

Two separate isues of funding support: school reform and equity

School Reform – Funding ways to help schools climb out of their well-worn grooves

For the most part, a school's budget is already allocated to maintain current services. Personnel contracts alone usually account for about 85% of a school's budget, sometimes more. Traditional schools whose pedagogy depends on lectures and drill, 45-minute "Carnegie" units of time and teachers isolated from one another, will have a great deal of trouble helping students meet proficiency on the performance assessments. Most districts do not have funds to make substantial investments in professional development, co-ordinating the curriculum, new teaching materials, re-organizing the school day or buying more meeting time for the teachers.

We know from our experience with the Carnegie initiative in some of our middle schools, that it takes a temporary extra investment to dislodge the professionals, gently, from doing business as usual, help them to work together in a new way and set them back in a new and much more flexible groove. (Even the work in the middle schools is by no means done.) Most schools' organizational patterns are overly rigid and unable to maximize the productivity of their staffs. To help all students meet standards, schools need to empower teachers to respond effectively and quickly to students' needs, research findings, new technologies or whatever presents itself in this changing world.

Article 31 Targeted Investments

The General Assembly has set aside money, allocated on a per pupil basis, to support such initiatives as professional development and improving technology. Most districts gratefully used those funds in the spirit in which they were intended, but many districts report that they are under intense pressure to apply these funds to basic operating expenses. The costs of education are rising while the taxpayers' capacity and willingness to increase funding are not. Further complicating the matter is the inequity between the districts, both in terms of existing funding and in terms of need. The ability to assess and realize the effects of these targeted funds is muddied by local fiscal pressures, traditions of local control, 36 different municipal management systems and by the significant resource disparities among the districts.

Equity

Tax revenue and expenditure: two views.

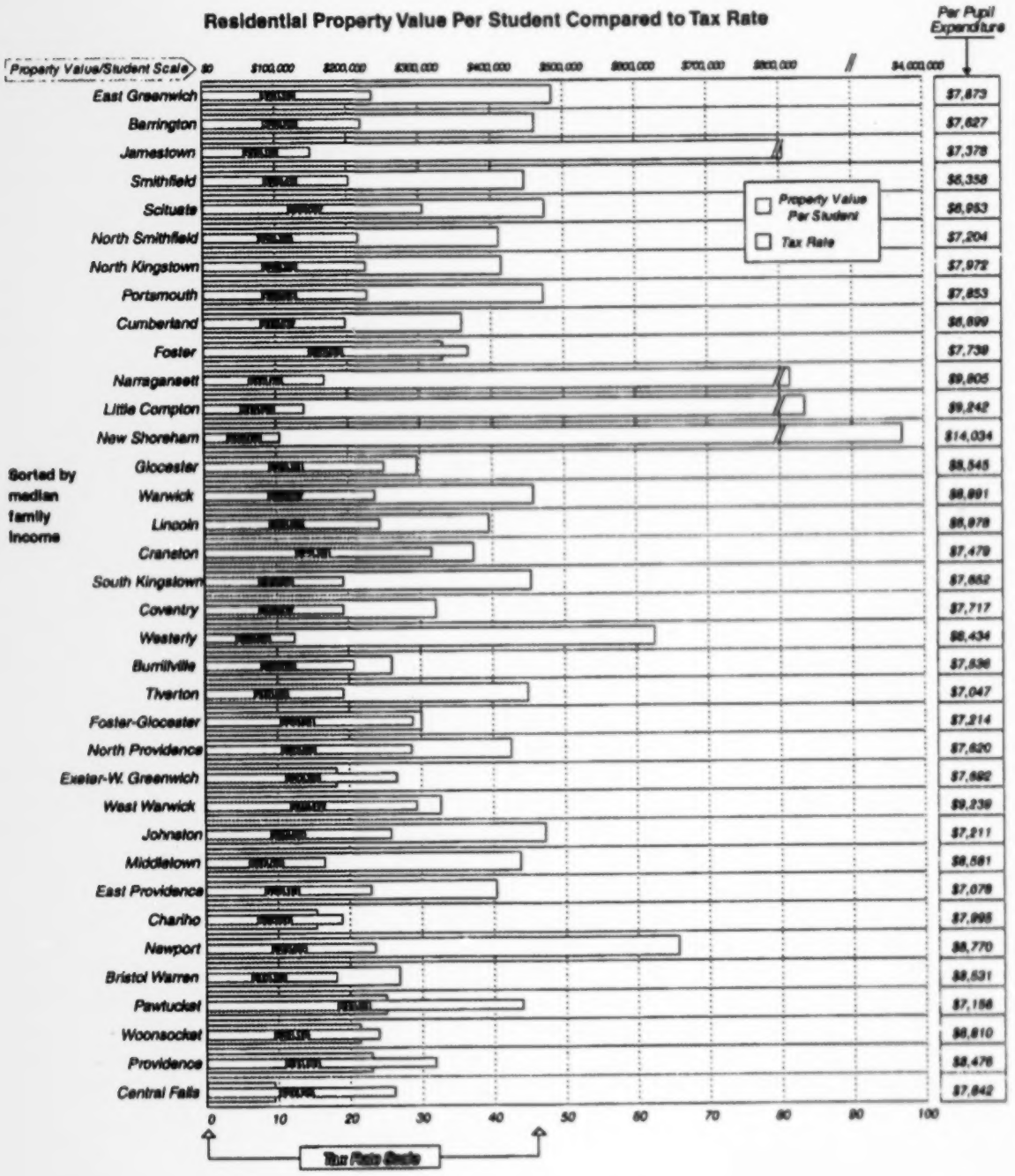
For the purposes of comparison, we placed the two charts which illustrate the same tax money face to face on the following pages. These charts show related information about the district municipalities' ability to generate revenue to support their municipal services, including their schools.

The Property Value per Pupil versus the Municipal Tax Rate (PVPP vs MTR) chart is expressed in hard numbers supplied by the RI League of Cities and Towns. The property value per pupil is the total assessed value for all the residential property in the district divided by the average daily enrollment of public school students residing in that district. The tax rate is the rate set by the city and town councils, expressed as a dollar rate per $1,000 of property value. Thus a $10.00 tax rate on a $100,000 home will raise $1,000 in tax revenue. A house valued at $50,000 will raise only half that amount, or $500. A poorer community, whose houses are only valued at $50,000 will have to raise their tax rate to $20.00 per $1,000 in order to generate $1,000. Municipal salaries, such as those of teachers, cost more or less the same from community to community, so poor communities must tax their citizens at much higher rates to generate the same amount of revenue as wealthier communities.

The Tax Capacity and Effort chart uses the assessed property value for the whole state, divided by the statewide capacity and multiplied by 100. The tax rate is similarly aggregated, divided by the state tax rate and multiplied by 100. This shows how much a municipality can or could tax their local properties compared to how much they do tax the local properties. The towns with large capacities tend to make the smallest efforts. Conversely, the towns with least capacity tend to make the largest efforts.

Perhaps a good way of thinking about both of these charts is to imagine what it would mean if the bars representing the Effort – in the latter chart – were all the same. Imagine moving that Effort bar to 100, which is what the above mathematical manipulation does in order to plot the districts on either side of that equalized 100 mark. If the Effort were identical between the districts and the capacity were as it is currently, the tax rates on the other chart would have to shift so that all towns, rich and poor were making roughly the same financial effort. (This is essentially what Act 60 in Vermont does.)

Too often districts are unable to do for their students what might be necessary because they cannot raise the revenue to do so. The most challenged children in the state tend to live in the poorer, urban communities who already tax their citizenry at the highest rates in the state. Bear in mind that even though the state pays a large share of the poorer districts' school bill, the highest tax rates in the state only serve to fill some of the gap. The poorer districts still have the highest class sizes in the state, buildings often in states of disrepair, an inability to support school sports and other extras, and students with the highest degree of need.



Data Source: RI Department of Administration, Office of Municipal Affairs

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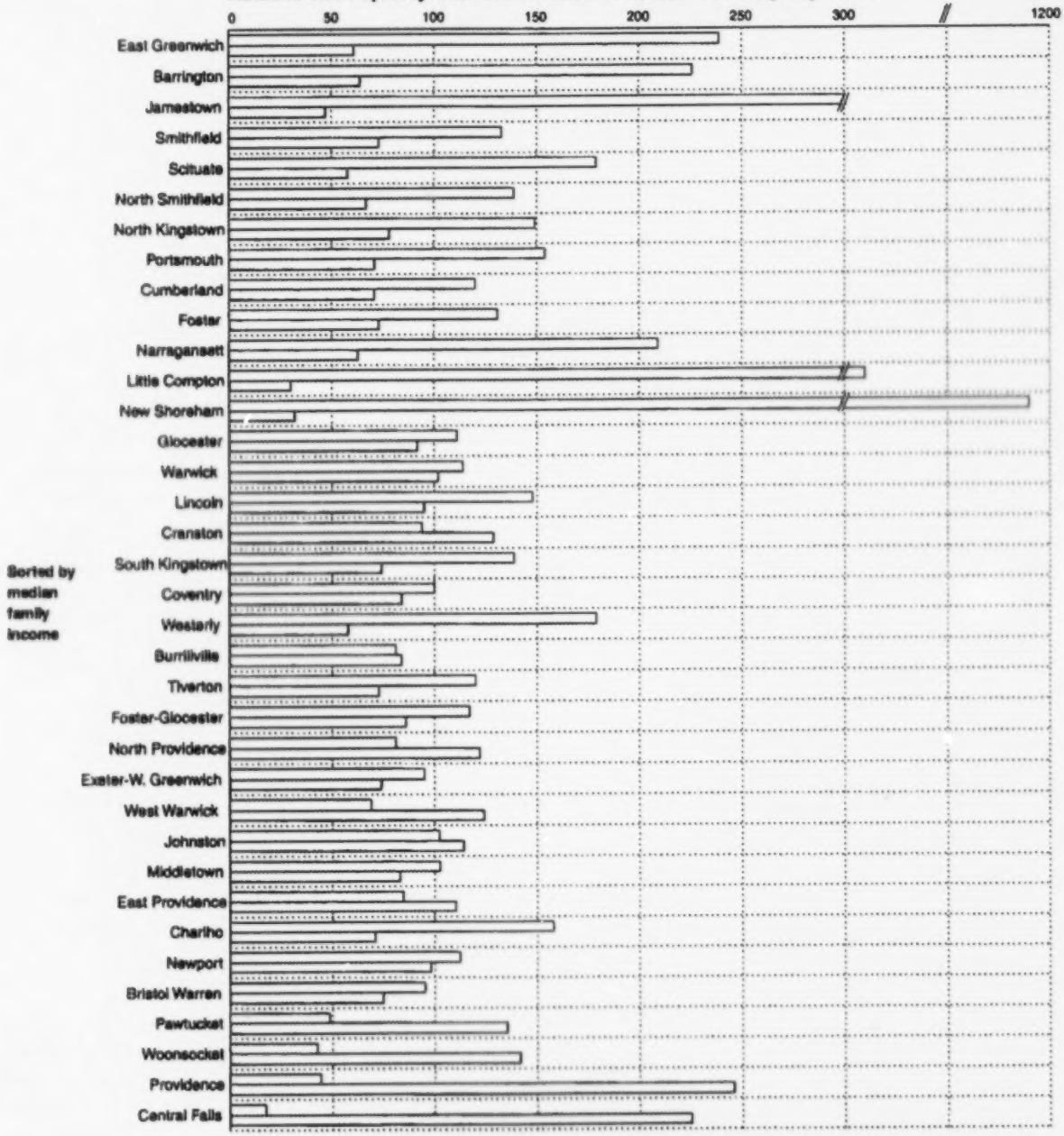
Rhode Island

Information Works! School Year 1998-1999

Relative Tax Capacity and Effort based on Residential Property Value



☐ **Property Tax Capacity:** The amount of taxable property wealth available to a municipality per capita. For educational purposes in the regional school districts, the capacities of the cities and towns have been translated into district capacities. The tax capacity of each district is divided by the statewide capacity and then multiplied by 100.

☐ **Tax Effort:** The extent to which a district is taxed in relation to the rest of the state. The property tax of the municipality is divided by the statewide property tax for all municipalities and multiplied by 100.

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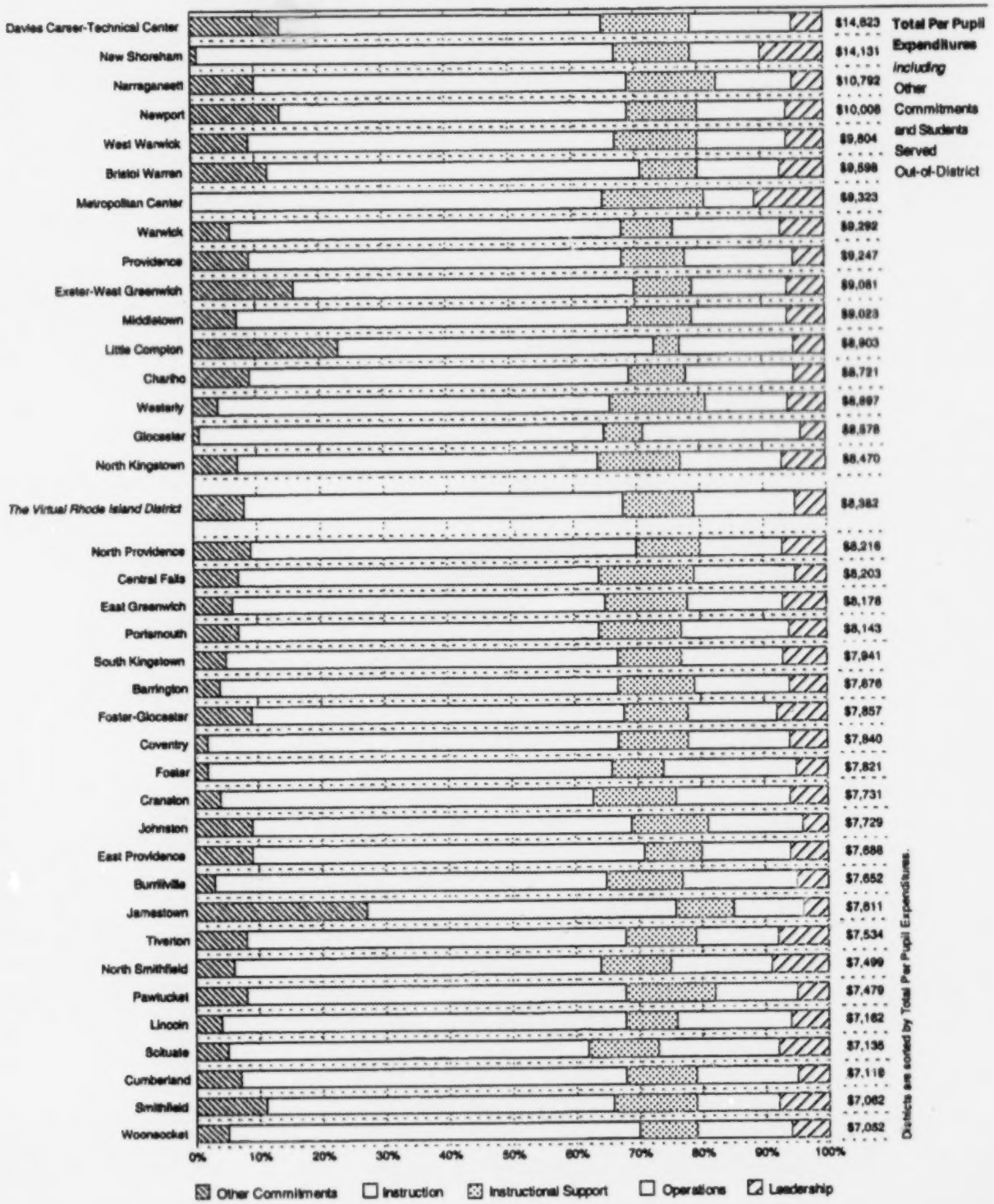
Per Pupil Expenditures by District, *Including* Other Commitments and Students Served Out-of-District



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District level school expenditures – In$ite data

Three years ago and in collaboration with RIDE, the General Assembly decided to establish a detailed and informative system of reporting educational expenditures for all school districts. They selected software called the In$ite Financial Analysis Model for EducationTM which is capable of tracking all expenditures through the local school district to the school sites. "All expenditures" includes expenditures from all funding sources – i.e., federal, state, and foundation grants, general revenue budget, total food service expenditures regardless of revenue source, and debt service if part of the school district's budget.

In$ite is not a new or a replacement accounting system. The districts will each maintain their own internal accounting systems. In$ite is a financial reporting tool that works with each district's existing system to provide a platform of user-friendly, consistent information to begin analyzing educational expenditures within schools and districts, and from school to school and district to district.

For more detail on In$ite, its implementation, a "map" of how the main categories are allocated and the specifics which define these categories, please refer to the User's Guide at the front of the 2000 *Information Works!* or go to the In$ite section on the website at: infoworks.ride.uri.edu .

A word of caution

The In$ite data is being reported publicly for the first time. Some oddities in the data do exist. Please be cautious about making assumptions for your school or district. Often district decisions or other factors particular to a district easily explain figures that initially seem unusually high or low. Superintendents or central office staff should be able to address your questions or concerns.

In$ite Chart #1

A first portrait of district-to-district expenditures

The chart to your left shows each district, or Local Education Authority (LEA) – which for these purposes include two state-operated schools, William Davies Career and Technical High School and the Metropolitan Area Career and Technical Center (the "Met"). The bar as a whole represents 100% of the expenditures for each LEA broken down by the five categories indicated in the legend. The total dollars are divided by the average daily membership of the public school students on whom those dollars are spent, to arrive at a per pupil expenditure which includes everything.

Average daily membership (ADM)

Average daily membership (ADM) calculates an average of the number of days all students are formally members of a district and/or a school per year.

Four of five expenditure categories

"Instruction" includes all face-to-face teaching, substitutes and all instruction-related classroom materials. "Instructional support" refers to pupil support such as guidance, library, extracurricular and health services; teacher support, which includes professional development; and program support which refers to evaluators, therapists, psychologists and so on. "Operations" includes transportation, food service, safety, facilities and all business services. "Leadership" includes principals, superintendents, costs associated with school committees, legal and secretarial.

Also included is a category called "other commitments."

The "Other commitments" category includes such expenses as costs for district students taught outside of the district, debt service for facilities construction and repair, capital projects, retiree benefits and community service operations such as adult continuing education, child care centers and so on.

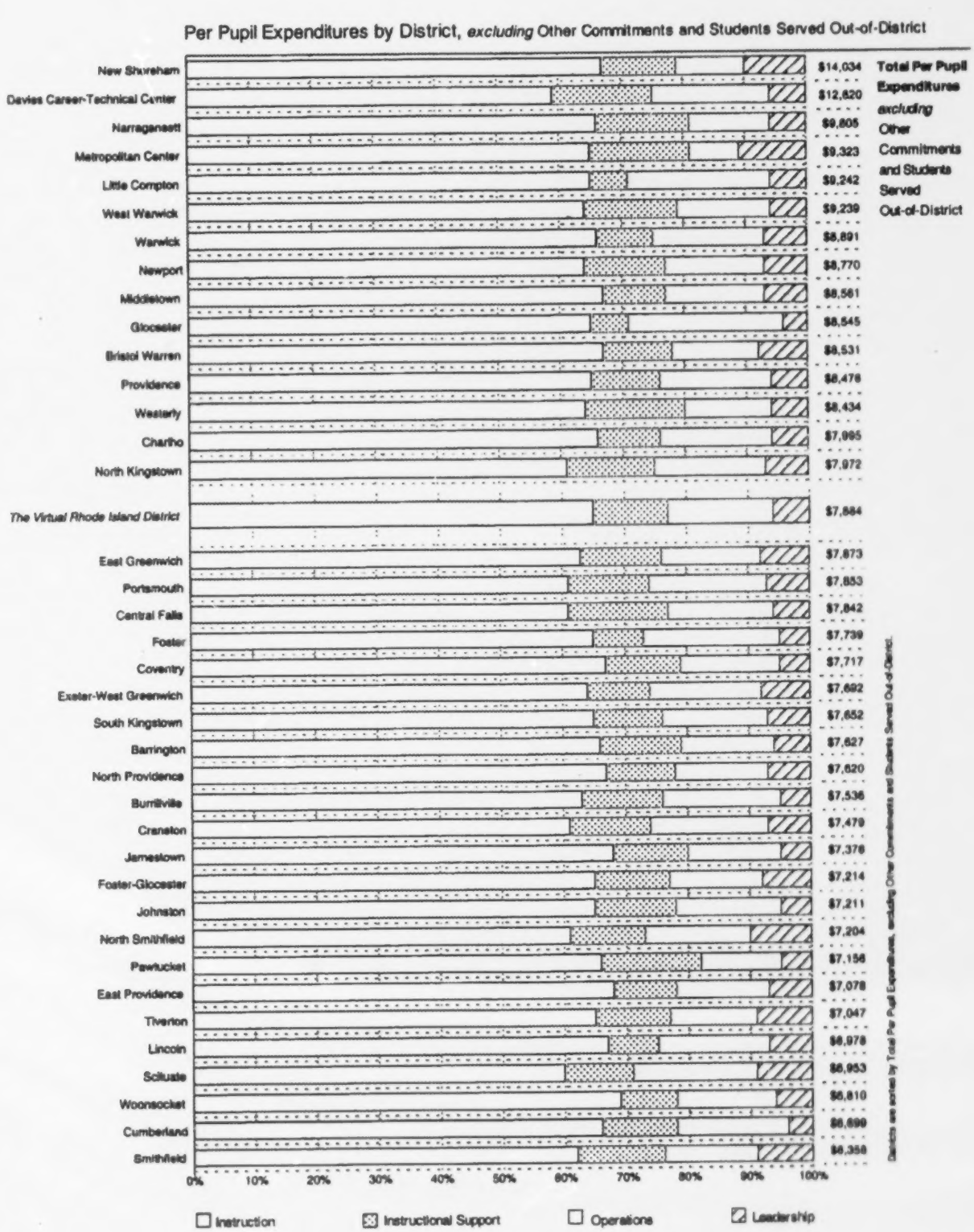
We first include the "Other commitments" category because it presents a full picture of district costs and to show that it varies considerably from district to district. For example, small towns – Little Compton and Jamestown – do not have high schools of their own. Their older students are counted as "out of district" because they are bussed to other public schools to which the district pays a tuition. Davies, a single school LEA, carries a sizable debt for the building of its facility, a large sum that would be absorbed as a district cost elsewhere. Major repairs or capital improvements will drive up the district's per pupil cost. For these reasons we include other commitments on the first chart – to get the fullest picture of expenditures – and then remove it on the next chart to show expenditures that are more comparable from district to district.

Per pupil expenditure (PPE)

This graph – along with those following – are sorted high to low, by per pupil expenditures. All expenditure dollars on the school and district charts are expressed as a per pupil figure. These per pupil expenditures are not based on a simple head count, but are based on the Average Daily Membership (ADM) of students and then their full-time equivalent (FTE) in their respective programs. A child's participation in Special Education Resource or English as a Second Language is counted only as a percentage of that child's day. In a six-period day, a child who spends one period in the program will count as one-sixth. Six such periods account for the full day's FTE, or per pupil expenditure.

The Virtual Rhode Island School District

For the purposes of comparing one district to a state average, we've created a "virtual" district by totaling every district's expenditures and dividing by the total "Average Daily Membership" enrollment for the state. The Virtual district does not imply a standard for best practices regarding expenditures; it merely serves to orient each individual district's spending to the current practices of the state as a whole.



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InSite Chart #2

Eliminating Other Commitments

Chart #2 removes the "Other Commitments" category for a truer picture of the strictly educational costs in the district itself. (Remember that this also eliminates the students served out of the district.) The chart is re-sorted, high to low per pupil expenditure, shuffling the districts somewhat as some of the anomalous costs are removed. The value of the total bar is represented in real numbers over to the right, expressed as a per pupil expenditure.

We remove the Other Commitments category partly to demonstrate that sometimes a category's removal can make a considerable difference in that district's PPE. Each district has decisions and circumstances that might strongly affect one category, but not the others. Again, please resist jumping to conclusions about the quality and wisdom of a district's expenditures. These charts give us only a first, rather rough portrait of RI's school expenditures as a whole without describing mitigating circumstances. For example, a rural district whose children travel great distances on a bus will have a relatively high per pupil transportation cost which will affect that district's Operations category.

Another reason to review expenditure categories is to look at the big picture and begin to identify possible anomalies. In this second chart, the PPE, excluding Other Commitments, certain obvious built-in aberrations deserve note:

New Shoreham

The New Shoreham district includes only Block Island where conducting any and all business is more expensive than on the mainland. School lunch supplies, for example, must be ferried or flown to the island, incurring costs beyond the costs to a school to whom a truck has easy access. New Shoreham's costs are high across most categories.

The Career and Technical programs and Centers

Career and technical (C&T) education is generally more expensive than regular education because of the specialized machinery, materials, shops and so on. Districts with their own dedicated C&T schools absorb the full cost into the district. Some districts share the cost of a C&T center with other districts. Still others send their students to one of the two state-operated C&T schools – Davies and the Met – which absorb all but the transportation costs for each student, no matter where the child comes from. Thus C&T costs appear to be unevenly balanced among the districts.

Future In$ite reports

In$ite reports are available in both the district and school-level charts in *Information Works!* We recommend consulting all three levels of information if a number in particular strikes you as curious. Each level provides a context for the other. Also remember that equality, such as equal per pupil expenditures, is not necessarily equity. Even comparatively similar districts have unique challenges and assets that might mean that one's per pupil expenditure would logically be higher than the other's. As we all become more familiar with these data, our ability to ask and answer sophisticated questions about educational investments will increase.

Please note that even this relatively generous surge of new financial information represents only the beginnings of what will become available from the In$ite initiative. Over the course of the coming year, RIDE expects to produce several reports using the In$ite data.

VI. Conclusion: A focus on the teacher/student relationship will help focus disparate efforts and initiatives

In the land of RI's Independent Man, RI's 36 school districts have developed long traditions of local control and self-governance. Each district tailors its schools to the unique personality of its city or towns. The dawn of the Information Age and the rampant development of technologies has created national and even international demands that educators prepare students to become intellectually high-functioning problem-solvers and life-long learners. The state of RI has responded by setting certain state standards, to which all schools and districts are accountable, without dictating the strategies or methods by which any school or district will meet the challenge.

Since the 1997 passage of Budget Article 31's school reform initiatives, most RI schools and districts are very obviously buckling down to the serious work of improving student achievement. With few exceptions, school communities seem alert to the task, conscious of the state accountability agenda, realistic about the work involved and eager to help students achieve state standards. Even without the diversity engendered by local control, education is a many-faceted enterprise, and it would be a very wealthy district indeed – in so many respects – that could afford to focus on all the important aspects of education at once. Literacy, numeracy, supporting challenged students, improving a sense of a safe, caring culture – these are only a few examples of key strategies to help all children meet high expectations.

Thus, to maximize the efficacy of each of our efforts and to minimize the time we spend casting about for winning methods, we recommend that all educational decisions be evaluated in terms of what will strengthen the student/teacher relationship. The health of that relationship – both as the principal stage for teaching and learning and as a mutually warm, caring relationship – will do more towards boosting student achievement than any educational theory, material resource or new textbook. Theories, resources and textbooks must serve the teachers in their efforts to communicate clear expectations about meeting high standards using materials interesting to the children. Theories, resources and textbooks must empower students to build the knowledge they need that, in turn, allows their teachers to take them on longer, more involved educational journeys. Supportive organizational structures are critical to encouraging the mutual trust and caring between teachers and students so that useful new theories, resources and textbooks are always a help.

Evaluating all school decisions through this lens of the student/teacher relationship will guide our diverse communities, making unique decisions, towards the same goal of 100% proficiency for all students.

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